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THE

JANUARY, 1893.

Manchester Quarterly

AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL

OF

LITERATURE AND ART.



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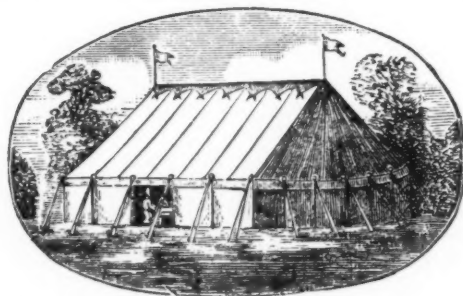
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SHELLEY'S GRAVE AT ROME.

From an Original Photograph by Abel Heywood, Junr.

STATION AND SURVEILLANCE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

UM



A SHELLEY COMMEMORATION.*

INTRODUCTORY.

BY GEORGE MILNER.

A BRIEF address from the Chair will suffice to introduce the Shelley Commemoration with which we are to occupy ourselves to-night. Such commemorations have often been ridiculed as idle, factitious, and useless. The action of indiscriminating admirers and heated partisans who set up their idols for the hour, and bend before them with a blind worship, may have lent some colour to this view; but, notwithstanding, I venture to urge that a Centenary Commemoration need not be an unmeaning thing, and that there are both convenience and sound common-sense in the idea of reconsidering the claims of a great writer after the lapse of a hundred years from the time of his birth. When such an interval has passed, it is usually possible to take a clearer and a juster view than at an

* This and the three following papers were amongst those read at a Meeting of the Manchester Literary Club, held on Nov. 7th, 1892, in commemoration of the Centenary of the birth of Shelley.

earlier date. Two things only are essential in such a celebration—first, that the person considered shall be intrinsically of sufficient importance to warrant the prominence given to him; and, second, that unquestioning laudation shall not take the place of sincere criticism and conscientious study.

My own estimate of Shelley may be summed up in a single sentence, a sentence which at once challenges opposition and exposes me to cross-firing, because it includes both a defence and a concession. Shelley was a great poet, but not one of the greatest. Indisputably he had what is called genius. No man of our century, perhaps, has had that particular quality in a more marked degree. His whole nature and temperament were essentially those of the poet. He was certainly born to sing; and such training as he gave himself—wide it was, and yet spasmodic—led clearly in the same direction. All the finer and more delicate qualities necessary to literary production were in excess. His imagination was large, his fancy nimble, his sense of melody exquisite. What, then, prevented him from ranking with the greatest? The answer is—that he was almost entirely wanting in that breadth which accompanies judgment, and in that weight which is the result of perfect sanity. Herein lies the final test. The very greatest poets are all healthily sane. They have Shelley's ethereal qualities, but they have also the strength and fixity which he had not.

If we turn to the life of Shelley we find ourselves probably on still more debatable ground. His life, in my view, is entirely inexplicable. The "Real Shelley," if there was one, evades you. You may try to explain and harmonise that life on twenty different lines, and you will always find yourself crossed and balked by some vagary which will not come into your system; phantoms and

illusions grow thickly around you, principles and motives disappear, or are wildly intermixed, and although you are unwilling to deny that possibly on some transcendental plane Shelley's perplexed existence might be harmonised, you are obliged to admit that when tested by ordinary rules and measures he can only be credited with a partial and intermittent sanity. Perhaps, if the key to the mystery is to be found at all, it should be sought for in his own words: "What is Love? Ask him who lives what is life; ask him who adores what is God." A devotee of love; an inspired madman; a dreamer of dreams; an eternal child—these are the phrases which describe him accurately enough.

In seeking to estimate the character of Shelley, we are met by a curious feature. He was much saner, I believe, in his writings than he was in his life. The exercise of his imagination sobered him rather than otherwise. Still the bulk of his work is too vague and air-drawn to have much abiding influence on the ordinary reader. A popular poet he can never be; but none the less, among the few who make the study of poetry a specialty, he will always be recognised as the author of some of the most exquisite verses in our language, and as one who has helped in no small degree to build up the style of other more generally accepted poets. Also, it should not be forgotten that, like many others who are best known by their metrical compositions, Shelley was an able writer of prose. In proof of this I need only refer to the "Essay on Christianity," and the "Defence of Poetry."

I shall venture to supplement these brief remarks by reading, as a tribute to the memory of Shelley, that one piece of his which, while it is thoroughly representative of his art, and pitched in the highest key, makes a nearer approach to popular acceptance than most of his other

poems. I allude to his incomparable ode, "To a Skylark." This will lead us from the general to the particular.

It is undoubtedly as a lyric poet that Shelley achieved his greatest success; and the lyric is, after all, the purest form of poetry. The Drama and the Epic are greater by their weight and bulk and continuity, but the highest levels have always been reached by the Ode or Lyric. This is because in such compositions the element of personal emotion vitalises most completely the body of thought, and also because, from their comparative brevity, there is less chance of the poet falling into those prosaic lapses which disfigure or modify the longer productions of even our greatest writers. What is there, for instance, in *Paradise Lost* which can equal the lyrics and shorter pieces of Milton; or when did Wordsworth in any of his more laboured and protracted poems come near to the sustained grandeur and perfection of the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality"?

Of Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark," it may be said that it is an almost perfect lyric, and that consequently it can never die. To begin with, the measure is most felicitous. Variety is obtained by the use of mixed single and double rhymes, and by the alternation of long and short lines. Considered only as verbal music it is the song of the lark itself transferred into words of marvellous beauty, flexibility, and power. Notwithstanding its essentially dithyrambic quality, its method and arrangement are singularly conspicuous, as a slight analysis will show. It may be divided into five sections. The first verse is an invocation; the next five describe the bird and his song. From the seventh to the twelfth verses the world of nature is ransacked to tell us what the song is like; and in this section of the poem we have the best illustration which I can adduce of what fancy is, in contradistinction to imagina-

tion. The truly Elizabethan line in the eleventh stanza :—

Makes faint with too much sweet
Those heavy-winged thieves—

is worthy of special note. In the five verses which follow (13 to 17), the poet is consciously drawing near to some magnificent conclusion, and he returns again to the bird and his song, but with a higher and more solemn motive than that which informed the earlier stanzas on the same subject. And then comes the reflective conclusion in those four verses, which are finer than all else, and entirely beyond criticism :—

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not :
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear ;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then as I am listening now.

This final section is as good an illustration of the working of the imaginative faculty as the stanzas previously alluded to were in reference to the action of the fancy. The line—

Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety,

I believe, suggested this noble conclusion by appealing to the poet's own peculiar consciousness and idiosyncrasy.

Certainly, no finer consummation could be conceived. When the magic music ceases we find ourselves still under the influence of its reverberations, and seem to see the poet standing in the Elysian fields, and, like the figures on the Grecian Urn of Keats, listening for ever to the "shrill delight" of his immortal bird.





THE STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF
SHELLEY: WITH A PILGRIMAGE TO
HIS GRAVE.

BY C. E. TYRER.

AT Lerici, on the Gulf of Spezzia, I had visited the house, now gaunt and dismantled and no longer known as Casa Magni, where Shelley spent the last months of his life. I had paced one sombre October afternoon the long beach at Via Reggio, where the poet's remains were cast up by the sea after that fatal voyage, and where they were burned in the presence of Byron and other friends; and when the early spring found me in Rome it was with a feeling of pious pilgrimage that I visited the spot under the shadow of the walls where the heart, which the hand of a friend had snatched from the fiery furnace, was laid to its long, long rest.

Though close to some of the foulest and ugliest portions of the modern city, the cemetery of the Protestants in Rome is a most sweet and lovely seclusion, hardly less so than the verses of "Adonais" would lead one to expect; and amid the solemn spires of its cypresses, its laurel

hedges, and the flowers that embroider its emerald turf, one readily forgets the filth and degradation and hideous factory chimneys which are so close at hand. There are indeed two cemeteries adjoining one another, and it was in the older one, now disused and rather neglected, that John Keats was buried in the year preceding that in which the heart of the poet who sang of him so magnificently in "Adonais" was laid to rest in the other. The latter, the modern burial ground, slopes gradually upwards to the purple brown shadow of the walls, while the pyramid of Caius Cestius is a little to the left and nearer the older ground; and along the grassy and tree-shaded avenues of the thickly sown God's acre I soon found my way without any assistance to the particular spot I had come to see, and which I had so often visited in imagination. It is in a little nook or angle of the wall, which completely surrounds it on three sides, that Shelley sleeps. This nook, if I rightly recollect, contains three graves, but for the moment there was only one gravestone which had for me any existence. Often as I had seen the words quoted, it was still not without profound emotion that I actually read for the first time the well-known inscription:—

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

COR CORDIUM.

NATUS IV AUG. MDCCXCII.

OBIIT VIII JUL. MDCCCXXII.

Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

The soft spring rain was falling on the time-worn slab of white marble; thick clusters of violet leaves crowded all around it, though the flowers were over, and there was a rank and luxuriant growth of wild grasses and other



THE GRAVES OF KEATS AND SEVERN AT ROME.

From an Original Photograph by Abel Heywood, Junr.

weeds, all flowerless. When I had noted these things, I turned away and found that there was another gravestone in the little nook which had an interest for me. This records that underneath lie the remains of "Edward John Trelawny, who died in England, August 13, 1881, aged 88," and below are these lines—

These are two friends whose lives were undivided :
 So let their memory be, now they have glided
 Under the grave ; let not their bones be parted,
 For their two hearts in life were single-hearted.

The young ardent poet-soul, and the old, old man, one of whose chief titles to remembrance is that for a few brief months he enjoyed the friendship of that young poet, and has left an admirable record of it—here they are, laid for ever side by side!

There are probably few poets of this century in regard to whom such diverse critical judgments have been expressed as about Shelley. While, for instance, Robert Browning has both in prose and verse expressed the most profound, almost adoring, admiration for him, Thomas Carlyle described him as "a windy phenomenon, a poor shrieking creature who has sung or said nothing that a serious man would be at the trouble of remembering."* For my own part, I will venture to express the opinion that Shelley's unmeasured worshippers and his extreme detractors are both equally wrong, and that a just and wise critic will steer a middle course. A great poet, but not of the greatest—that is, to my thinking, the right judgment in regard to him; and in this connection it cannot be too much regretted that the Englishman of our own day who was perhaps best of all fitted to estimate the true value of

* Sir C. G. Duffy, "Conversations and Correspondence with Carlyle."—*Contemporary Review*, Jan., 1892.

poetry—I mean, of course, Matthew Arnold—passed away from us without supplementing his casual and fragmentary remarks on Shelley with a more full and adequate criticism. It is sufficiently obvious, I think, from certain remarks in his criticism of Professor Dowden's "Life of Shelley" in the second series of "Essays in Criticism," that Arnold, though he did not by any means rank among Shelley's unqualified admirers and had a keen sense of the weaknesses both of the man and the poet, took nevertheless (as how could so fine a poet help doing?) a deep delight in much of his poetry.

As to Shelley's opinions—theological, political, social, and the rest—though the devout Shelleyite still, I suppose, busies himself with them, they have no serious interest for most of us, who see no reason to suppose that Shelley was specially inspired to utter words of wisdom on the most momentous subjects. We may read in them the generous nature of the man and his love for his fellow-creatures, and not the less his ignorance of the world and of human nature. Nor need we trouble ourselves much about his life and his personal conduct. As to his life, we have now, thanks to Professor Dowden, the fullest documentary material ready to our hand, though whether the presentation of much of that material can be said to serve any useful purpose is another matter. But, of course, now-a-days all the details in the life of a great man—his youthful escapades no less than his youthful verses or novels—as well as all matters which can be said in the remotest way to have reference to him, must be dragged into the light of day and published to the world—

'Tis wise and right

The many-headed beast should know.

So Mr. Dowden gives us, for example, all that he can rake up about that curious person Miss Clairmont, and all the ins and outs of Shelley's relations and correspondence with

the Godwins. "What a set," says Matthew Arnold of the Shelley circle. For my part, I would rather think of him without reference to his "set," nor do I even consider it matters much whether any future revelations may help to throw further light upon his separation from Harriet, or to modify one's moral judgment (whatever that may be) of his conduct in regard to her. One thing, at any rate, is made abundantly evident in Professor Dowden's book, and that is Shelley's general weakness in the sphere of action. Almost all his experiments in that sphere turned out to be failures, and though he occasionally judges shrewdly, and shows some business capacity, as a rule his ignorance of the world and of human nature (especially, perhaps, that of women) was, and always remained, that of a child.* We love him not the less for this, and we may indeed well delight to think of him as a child ("the eternal child" he was called by De Quincey), a sweet confiding generous child, whose rightful place was in another and purer clime than that of this weary and complicated and sin-stained world.

A great poet certainly, but not of the greatest. Such I hold Shelley to be, and for this estimate I will now attempt to give some reasons. His place is not among the world's greatest poets, firstly, as I hold, because his grasp on reality is a weak one; of human life and of human nature he has little knowledge, and the world in general presents itself to him, not as it actually is, but as it is seen through the irradiating but distorting medium of his own idealizing spirit. Thus we notice in him a singular poverty in the sphere of ideas; he feels deeply, but he is not in touch with

* Of this I know no more curious instance than the fact that after he had deserted Harriet and married Mary he actually proposed to his former wife that she should come and join Mary and himself on the Continent. I have not the reference to this here, but am sure of the fact.

the life and movement of the world, and thus his poems have for us little illuminating power. Now all the very greatest poets—Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe—are distinguished above all by this, that they see widely and at the same time keenly; they are pre-eminently seers as well as bards, giving us the highest expression of the life and thought of their respective ages, and not only surveying the past and the present, but having a firm hold on the future. Thus their poems have, as it were, a universal value; they exist not for their own age alone, but for all ages. Now Shelley, except so far as concerned his physical nature, did not dwell in the actual world at all, but in an ideal world of his own, a world which he peopled with beautiful and splendid phantoms. He has even, it seems to me, less hold on the actual world than Keats, in whose later poems—as well as in the letters and prose fragments—there are indications that he was passing from the feverish dreams of his youth to a wider and truer vision of the world and of human life, that he had begun to realize the truth of Wordsworth's line—

To the solid ground
Of Nature trusts the mind that builds for aye.

In "The Cenci," it is true, Shelley forsakes for once his dream-world for the actual one, and deals directly with the life and action of mankind (and that "The Cenci" shows great dramatic power as well as contains splendid poetry can hardly be questioned); but here again he falls short of the highest excellence, if not otherwise, at any rate in this respect, that he has not realised the fact that incest is no subject for the poet's and especially for the dramatist's art. He sees that it may be accompanied by beautiful and attractive circumstances, and he shows much delicacy and refinement in dealing with it; but he does not see that

the unnatural horror of the subject itself must prevent a drama which is based upon it, however splendid its tragic power may be, from achieving the kind of success for which all true dramas are written—successful representation on the stage. However, even if we admit that "The Cenci" forms a partial exception to this view of Shelley's poetry, the general truth of that view is not at all impaired.

What is "The Revolt of Islam,"* apart from the occasional splendour of the poetry, but a brilliant phantasmagoria; what the "Prometheus Unbound" save a splendid but impalpable vision, which keeps its place in poetry mainly by virtue of some lovely lyric strains; what "The Witch of Atlas" but in very truth such "stuff as dreams are made of"? As to the exquisite "Epipsychidion," the poet has himself described it as "an idealized history of my life and feelings,"† and the same remark is hardly less true of "Alastor." From this general characteristic of Shelley's poetry, it results that when the poet is not actually inspired, the poverty of the matter makes his verses very poor stuff indeed. As we all know, "the good Homer sometimes sleeps," and in the great poems of Dante and Milton there are long passages of a very uninspired character, but here the matter has generally a weight, and the verses have, in consequence, a dignity which redeems them from condemnation as commonplace. This frequent impression of poverty in the matter of Shelley's poems is not unfrequently increased by his habit of repetition, and

* It is very singular, to say the least, that the author of "The Revolt of Islam," should have pronounced Keats' "Endymion" almost unreadable.—Letter to C. Ollier, September 6, 1819.

† Letter to Mr. Gisborne, June, 1822. If we are to believe Mrs. Shelley (letter to Mrs. Gisborne, March 7, 1822), Emilia Viviani proved in the result to be a particularly sordid and commonplace young woman.

that not only of ideas, but also of language. I have no space to give instances of this; but the careful student of his poetry will have no difficulty in finding the same thought, or feeling, or image (especially the latter) reproduced in different poems under very slightly different forms. A still more serious defect, as it seems to me, is Shelley's abuse of simile and metaphor. The greatest poets, such as Dante and Milton, are in the habit of using these ornaments sparingly, and usually with some definite purpose of illustrating their theme and assisting the reader's comprehension; but Shelley often sprinkles them broadcast over his verses, like daisies or anemones over the fields of spring. The last stanza of the "Ode to Liberty," for instance, contains no less than five separate similes, not one of which has any special appositeness, as well as a great variety of metaphorical expressions. The fragment of "The Triumph of Life," though containing lines and passages worthy of almost any poet who ever lived, is yet vitiated as a whole both by the extreme obscurity of the general argument and drift, and by this excessive use of simile and metaphor, the latter serving rather to increase than to diminish that obscurity. In the intricacy of its verses, which are far more complicated than is usual even in the "terza rima," and in the wonderful profusion of the imagery, it might be compared to some rich mosaic, where the lavish and elaborate ornamentation prevents any distinct pattern from being readily traceable.* These similes (as, for instance, in the last-mentioned poem) are often extremely beautiful in themselves, even when they have no vital connection with their context; one cannot, therefore,

* Nevertheless, and notwithstanding its fragmentary character, there seems to me no doubt that "The Triumph of Life" deserves to rank among Shelley's very finest efforts. It is probable, too, that many of its difficulties result from imperfections and lacunae in the manuscript.

always wish them away, but one may fairly say none the less that they often help to sacrifice the total effect of a poem to a multitude of scattered beauties.

Having thus attempted to give some reasons why Shelley's place is not among the world's greatest poets, I must now try to justify my contention that he is nevertheless a great one. He is then, as I conceive, eminently a great lyric poet: it is in the short, but daring flight of the lyric that the poet's soul especially delights, and in which it shows its true greatness. It might be said of him that, like his own "Skylark," he "singing still doth soar, and soaring ever singeth." It was, perhaps, just that ignorance of, and that dissatisfaction with, the world, and with human life, as they presented themselves to him, whence his weakness arose, which at the same time impelled him to soar and sing, as if he would mount on the wings of song to a loftier and nobler clime; which, in a word, made him a great lyric poet.* Shelley is eminently a subjective poet: it is his own joys and his own sorrows which are the burden of his song; and the subjective poet ever finds the best outlet for his emotions in short but intense lyrical strains. There are, indeed, great lyrical poets who are not subjective, who in strains of lyric verse celebrate their fatherland, or the fierce delights of battle, or the joys and sorrows of their kind, or who, even when singing their own joys and sorrows, give them a universality which makes them, as it were, representative of those of the race. Such poets were Tyrtæus and Körner and our own Campbell, such were Goethe and Burns and Béranger. Now, though there are in Shelley a few

* Well may we apply to him the words of Emilia Viviani, which he puts in the forefront of "Epipsychidion"—"The loving soul soars beyond that which is created, and creates in the infinite a world all for itself, far other than this dim and terrible abyss."

splendid exceptions to the predominant subjectivity of his lyrics (such, for instance, as that magnificent lyric in "Hellas"—"Worlds on worlds are rolling ever"), the vast proportion, and nearly all the best of them, are directly inspired by purely personal emotions; they are musical wails, or (occasionally) musical raptures. This is even true in cases where the direct and professed object of his song is something purely external, as in the "Skylark." When, in an Italian midsummer twilight, he sees the bird soaring and soaring aloft till it is lost to view in "the pale purple even," while its "shrill delight" still descends earthwards, he cannot help contrasting its "blithe spirit" and its "happy strain" with the languor and satiety which he has himself known, with the shadow of pain which for ever dogs his footsteps, with the longing for something unattainable on earth he has so often experienced—

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not ;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

To a nature such as was Shelley's—a nature so intense, so profoundly sad, so baffled by circumstances—the outlet afforded by his splendid gift of lyrical song must have been of inestimable value. In the very act of singing his woes, he must have found, one would think, a magnificent consolation, at least for the moment. It is hardly necessary to refer to any examples to show the pervading personal character of his lyrics, nor yet their pervading tone of hopeless melancholy. All lovers of the poet know well such verses as the beautiful "Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples," "Mutability," "Misery—a Fragment," "Wilt thou forget the happy hours?" "Rarely, Rarely, Comest Thou, Spirit of Delight," "When passion's trance

is overpast," "O World! O Life! O Time!" "The serpent is shut out from Paradise," and "When the lamp is shattered." Here is a short lyric, which is penetrated by the very spirit of hopeless sadness:—

That time is dead for ever, child,
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever!
We look on the past,
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale, and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then rolled by;
Its waves are unreturning;
But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

This melancholy note is, as I have indicated, not always present. "The Cloud," for instance, seems to have been the product of a happy, almost gay-hearted mood; and the charming verses called "The Invitation" record the delight and buoyancy of spirit called forth by a beautiful February day on the Italian coast. It was with Shelley, as with all intense and melancholy natures; they have transient visitations of the keenest pleasure, but soon comes the reaction, all the greater for the greatness of the happiness which has preceded it. Thus, the blissful moment seems, as he tells us in those most lovely "Lines written among the Euganean Hills," but as a "flowering isle in the sea of Life and Agony," and "the ancient pilot, Pain," soon sits once more beside the helm of his bark. If I have correctly described the character and the inspiration of Shelley's lyric genius—and it can hardly be questioned

that it is by virtue of his lyrics that he holds his best claim to greatness as a poet—it follows that the bulk of his poetry can never be truly popular, that it can never appeal to the general heart of men. There are, perhaps, a few exceptions to this; but in the main his lyrics, as well as his other poems, appeal to a small audience, to those persons in particular who are moved to sympathy and admiration by something kindred in their natures to his own.

Having spoken thus generally of the lyrics, I cannot refrain from adding a word on one characteristic which is seldom wanting to them—I mean their most sweet and subtle music. “A poet” (says Shelley, in his noble “Defence of Poetry”) “is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why.” What it is which constitutes the peculiar musical effect of a particular verse or poem, is a very subtle and difficult question; or, rather, properly speaking, it is not only difficult, but insoluble, for analysis, though it may help to show how certain elements, such as the skilful use of alliteration, go to increase the musical effect, can never explain how that total effect is produced: that is the inspired bard’s incommunicable secret. “The language of poets” (to quote once more “A Defence of Poetry”) “has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which, it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence, than the words themselves, without reference to that peculiar order. Hence the vanity of translation. . . . The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower.” Of Shelley it may truly be said, to quote again his already-quoted words, that “his

sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought": then he draws notes from his lyre of most subtle sweetness, a music different (perhaps, in a sense, more entrancing) from what we hear in any other poet.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
 What if my leaves are falling like its own !
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
 Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
 Sweet though in sadness.

Thus the poet addresses the wild wind of autumn: and it is the weird, unearthly notes of such a lyre (that lyre being his own intense, melancholy, and highly wrought nature), that we for ever listen to in Shelley, if we have an ear for such music. He could say truly—"I pant for the music which is divine"; but though the music of his own strains might seem to himself to come far, far short of that divine music, it is still a music which is not all of this earth, a music which, like that of his own skylark, seems to come down to us from some more ethereal region.

One other matter remains to be spoken of: Shelley's attitude towards and treatment of external nature. That he had the keenest possible sense of the beauty of this world, that the sights and sounds of nature filled him with delight and rapture, is known to all readers of his poetry. Yet still he is ever apt to idealize that nature: the nature which we find in his poetry is not the same nature which we find in Wordsworth and in Keats, two poets at least equally great, and equally devout lovers of the beauties of the natural world. There is something vague and unsubstantial about the natural scene which Shelley beholds: it is a world more fantastically beautiful than that which we see, a world arrayed in the rainbow hues of his own imagination. It thus comes to pass that Shelley is happiest when dealing with those elements and aspects of nature, which, from their grandeur, their remoteness, or their

evanescent character, appeal rather to the spiritual part of our beings than to our material senses. The blue depths of the summer sky and the phenomena of the clouds; the pageants of sunrise and of sunset; the mysterious splendour of sun and moon and stars; the Alps, whose loftiness and immensity baffle the imagination, with their snowy peaks and domes and their rivers of ice; the awful element of the ocean, which, one day, was to lure him to an untimely death—it is in the portrayal of these things, and such as these, that Shelley shows his true power as a poet of nature. Nature's secret things, those by means of which he might hope to arrive at some knowledge of the mysterious force or forces which have shaped and which govern the world, had ever a subtle fascination for Shelley, and thus he says of the poet in "Alastor":—

Nature's most secret steps

He, like her shadow, has pursued, where'er
 The red volcano overcanopies
 Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
 With burning smoke; or, where bitumen lakes
 On black bare-pointed islets ever beat
 With sluggish surge or where the secret caves,
 Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
 Of fire and poison, inaccessible
 To avarice or pride, their starry domes
 Of diamond and of gold expand above
 Numberless and immeasurable halls,
 Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
 Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.

This love of caverns, and of all places which descend into the bowels of the earth, is, of course, familiar to all readers of Shelley; and not less so the peculiar fascination exerted over him by snakes and serpents, creatures which, in Christian theology, are associated with the fall of man, and which in the older religions were often connected with mystic rites of worship. May we not apply to Shelley himself those beautiful lines of his on Keats, and say that

the mysterious Power to which he sought to penetrate by means of that nature which at once veils and expresses it, has received him to itself?

He is made one with Nature : there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird ;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own,
Which wields the world with never-weary'd love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

In some beautiful stanzas of the "Adonais," which describe the procession of the mourners who throng into the death-chamber, after "The Pilgrim of Eternity" and "Ierne's sweetest lyrist," the poet introduces himself:—

Midst others of less note came one frail Form,
A phantom among men, companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
Whose thunder is its knell. He, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift—
A love in desolation masked—a Power
Girt round with weakness ; it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour ;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow——

Beside this most touching and beautiful self-revelation, one naturally hastens to place Matthew Arnold's well-known words on Shelley, "a beautiful but ineffectual angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain." It is finely said, and if the views I have attempted to express are not altogether unjust, has a certain measure of truth ; yet I shrink from the words "in vain," nor do I believe that the

genial poet and critic would really have maintained that the life-work of Shelley was in any sense altogether a failure. Shelley's nature was, in some respects, a weak one, and that weakness is reflected in his poetry; but in spite of that weakness—nay, perhaps in a measure by reason of it, we love him as a man; and because of the glorious and untameable strength which bursts forth again and again through the weakness of his verse, we worship him as a poet. And thus it is that he is enshrined in the hearts of those who love what is most poetical in poetry and most endearing in human nature; and thus, with a sense of devout pilgrimage, they visit the spot where, under the shadow of the Roman wall, and half buried beneath the Roman violets—not far away likewise from the remains of a beloved brother poet—rests that “heart of hearts.”





"ARIEL AND THE SNAKE."

BY JOHN MORTIMER.

HIS friends called him "Ariel and the Snake," we are told, and the person thus nicknamed was the poet Shelley. So far from resenting the epithets, he not only accepted both, but adopted them when speaking of himself, which would imply a certain consciousness of truth in the portraiture.

It may appear a little fanciful and somewhat unworthy of so great an occasion as a centenary celebration of his birth to regard the poet from the standpoint presented by such appellations, but perhaps a word or two suggested by such an aspect may be forgiven in view of contributions of a much more weighty and comprehensive kind.

"Ariel and the Snake"—it is a curious combination and a contrast, suggesting at once an airy spirit and a wingless, gliding, earth-bound creature, with a certain beauty of its own no doubt, but of a kind repellent rather than attractive in the ordinary acceptation. How did the poet come to gain these nicknames, and in what degree are they warranted?

On the 4th August, 1792, there was born into the world one of the most remarkable spirits that ever found human

environment. It seems to have been wrongly balanced from the beginning, to have lacked a certain power of seeing things as they really are, or rather as they present themselves to the average mind. It was of imagination all compact, and from the earliest dawn to the latest hour seemed more outside the world of fact than in it. One of the earliest pictures of Shelley is of a child with a restless imagination, which expressed itself in the creation of legendary and weird tales, which he would tell to some other wondering child seated on his knee. Among the hobgoblins and strange creatures of his imagination we read of a "Great Tortoise" which dwelt in Warnham pond, and was made to do wonderful things for the edification of Shelley's young audience. Afterwards the "Old Snake" took the place of the tortoise. The tortoise was a pure fiction, but the original snake "had a genuine existence, and met an accidental death through the scythe of a gardener." This snake, it seems, was an ancient one, and had inhabited the gardens of Field Place for several generations. This serpent seems to have impressed the poet in a peculiar way, and the trail of it, if we may so speak, is found in much of his poetry.

In Shelley's case the child was father to the man. This is what Trelawny says of him on his first introduction to the poet, which occurred not long before his death. It was at Pisa, and Trelawny was visiting the Williamses. He tells us that while conversing with them he noticed a pair of glittering eyes steadily fixed upon him and shining out of the darkness of a passage near the open door. Mrs. Williams, seeing that Trelawny had been so attracted, went to the door and said, "Come in, Shelley, it's only our friend Tre just arrived." "Then," says Trelawny, "swiftly gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall, thin stripling held out both his hands; and though I could hardly believe, as

I looked at his flushed, feminine, and artless face, that it could be the poet, I returned his warm pressure. After the ordinary greetings and courtesies he sat down and listened. I was silent from astonishment: was it possible this wild-looking, beardless boy could be the veritable monster at war with all the world?" Trelawny afterwards came upon the poet in his favourite nest in a pine wood, and found that he had been inditing those lines which he sent "With a Guitar, to Jane," the Mrs. Williams of the previous narrative. In that lyric the poet commences thus:—

Ariel to Miranda.—Take
This slave of Music, for the sake
Of him who is the slave of thee.

Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of more than ever can be spoken;
Your guardian spirit Ariel, who
From life to life must still pursue
Your happiness, for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own.

This "poor Ariel" of our poetry was gifted with a spirit poetical in the highest degree, displaying, as it did, those two faculties of the interpretative kind which, as Matthew Arnold says, consist of the magical rendering of the outward life of Nature together with the expression, as with a divine inspiration, of "the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature." But it lacked a certain true balance, and expressed itself in an exaggerated way, so that the latest criticism declares that the inheritor of this poetic faculty was not entirely sane, and the poetry which he produced was not entirely sane either. Yet of such a lofty order was the thought, and so divine was the music of its expression, that it has been described as angelic, and yet so perverted withal, in some directions, that the poet has been called a mad angel.

To regard our poet as an Ariel is to place him a little lower than the angels, but at the same time to relegate him to the region of airy spirits. That he was such an airy spirit may go unquestioned, a spirit wayward and uncontrollable, whose want of restraint was the secret of its defects. It was essentially an idealistic spirit, surveying the world of common things through a medium which often glorified or distorted them unduly, but a spirit which was for ever striving after some ideal good. It could perceive the beauty of the world and penetrate the secrets of Nature, and out of these materials create new worlds quite other than that in which it moved. To put right some human wrong, to set forth some moral or spiritual truth, this idealistic spirit deemed it necessary to construct, by means of its glowing and boundless imagination, some new realm or theatre of action peopled by strange creatures, mortal and immortal, through whose speech and actions the moral or spiritual problem was to be solved.

Following this Ariel in his wanderings through regions where the unreal and the real are curiously blended, we find ourselves on the cavernous shores of strange seas; we climb mysterious mountains, thread the mazes of dense forests, and sail in moonstone-prowed shallops over the waters of enchanted lakes; we dwell amid surroundings that are like glorified transformation scenes, changeful in aspect, light, and colour; we hold converse with mortals and immortals, for this Ariel loves to call up other spirits from the vasty deep with which to hold communion. All this, however, involves a strain upon the average sublunary mind, which often finds its wings too weak to follow the soaring Ariel in his flights, or too much under the influence of the ordinary facts of life, to feel comfortable for any long time in regions so ethereal and in company with spirits so sublime.

But it is when Ariel sings that for most of us he is most charming, whether it be the lengthened death song of "Adonais," the "Ode to the Skylark," "The Sensitive Plant," or those sweet morsels such as "Music, when soft voices die," "My soul is an enchanted boat," "Far, far away, O ye halcyons of memory," or "A widowed bird sat mourning, upon a wintry bough."

From Ariel to the Snake seems a great descent, but, however, nothing serious is involved. The way he got the nickname was in this wise. We are told that it was first given to him by Byron during a reading of *Faust* by Shelley. When he came to the line of Mephistopheles, which he translated into "My aunt, the renowned snake," Byron said, "Then you are her nephew." Shelley's friends recognised the appositeness of the resemblance "because of his noiseless gliding movements, bright eyes, and ethereal diet."

Reference has already been made to "The Great Old Snake" of his childhood, and it is somewhat curious that not only should his fondness for snakes crop out frequently in his verses, but that he himself should bear some resemblance to one. That he accepted the name is evident, and that he attached no degrading associations with it is certain, as in one of his personal poems of a sad kind, addressed to his friend Williams, the first line begins:—

The serpent is shut out from Paradise.

Those who are familiar with the poet's verse will often detect the serpent's eyes gleaming out, or come across the snake sliding on its sinuous way.

Here are a few of these instances. In "Alastor," describing "the white ridges of the chafed sea," he says—

Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge,
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.

In "The Revolt of Islam" we find this passage:—

Then first two glittering lights were seen to glide
In circles on the amethystine floor,
Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,
Like meteors on a river's grassy shore.

In the same poem he asks—

Did my spirit wake
From sleep as many-coloured as the snake
That girds eternity?

In "Rosalind and Helen" we have—

The snake,
The pale snake, that with eager breath,
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,
Is beaming with many a mingled hue
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood
In the light of his own loveliness.

In "Prometheus Unbound" we read thus:—

Sink with me then!
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight
Into a shoreless sea.

In "The Witch of Atlas" we come upon—

The sly serpent, in the golden flame
Of his own volumes interwolved.

In "Adonais" we read how—

The green lizard and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

And again how—

Swift as a thought by the snake memory stung
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

In "Mont Blanc" he tells how—

The glaciers creep,
Like snakes that watch their prey.

In "Prince Athanase" we find—

A snake which fold by fold,
Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend
Which clenched him, if he stirred, with deadlier hold.

In "A Vision of the Sea" we are brought to where—

One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with snubowa. The jar and the rattle
Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness.

Even in the charming lines on "Music" the serpent
finds a place:—

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,
More! oh more!—I am thirsting yet!
It loosens the serpent which care has bound
Upon my heart to stifle it.

In "An Unfinished Drama" he says of a strange flower—

Its stem and tendrils seemed
Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded
With azure mail and streaks of woven silver;
And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds
Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel,
Until the golden eye of the bright flower
Through the dark lashes of those veined lids,
Gazed like a star into the morning light.

In "The Revolt of Islam," again, there is a magnificent description of a fight in mid air between an eagle and a serpent which the poet witnessed from some jutting promontory of a mountain overhanging the sea. The passages are much too long for quotation, but the thick of the fight is thus described:—

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed
Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing
Its lessening orbs, sometimes, as if it failed,
Drooped through the air; and still it shrieked and wailed,
And, casting back its eager head, with beak,
And talon unremittingly assailed
The wreathed Serpent, who did ever seek
Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

What life, what power, was kindled and arose
 Within the sphere of that appalling fray !
 For, from the encounter of those wondrous foes,
 A vapour like the sea's suspended spray
 Hung gathered : in the void air, far away,
 Floated the shattered plumes ; bright scales did leap,
 Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,
 Like sparks into the darkness ;—as they sweep,
 Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.

The end of it all is that the mighty Serpent is vanquished and falls into the sea, while the Eagle "with clang of wings and scream" sails triumphantly away. It is afterwards explained by the poet—and it comes strangely to the reader—that these two opposing forces in the air represent the strife between good and evil, but it is the Eagle which represents evil, the stronger power in this case, while the serpent is the "great Spirit of Good."

Lizards as well as serpents and snails, with other creeping things, are familiar objects among the poet's illustrations, and in like manner it is from a chameleon that he derives the little poem called "An Exhortation."

The lines are very suggestive in view of the poet's nature.

Chameleons feed on light and air ;
 Poets' food is love and fame.
 If in this wide world of care
 Poets could but find the same
 With as little toil as they,
 Would they ever change their hue
 As the light chameleons do,
 Suiting it to every ray
 Twenty times a-day ?
 Poets are on this cold earth
 As chameleons might be
 Hidden from their early birth
 In a cave beneath the sea.
 Where light is, chameleons change ;
 Where love is not, poets do.
 Fame is love disguised : if few
 Find either, never think it strange
 That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
A poet's free and heavenly mind.
If bright chameleons should devour
Any food but beams and wind,
They would grow as earthly soon
As their brother lizards are.
Children of a sunnier star,
Spirits from beyond the moon,
Oh ! refuse the boon !

It occurs to one here, and may be set down for what it is worth, that the word chameleon means a ground-lion, and that in one of its various uses the name Ariel is construed into meaning "lion of God."

In conclusion, too, and regarding our poet as Ariel, it may be noted that it was from a boat first christened Don Juan, but afterwards changed to the more fitting name of Ariel, that Shelley was drowned, and that the epitaph upon his grave concludes with those three lines from Ariel's song in "The Tempest"—

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.





SHELLEY'S LYRICS.

BY EDMUND MERCER.

IT is a doubtful compliment to a poet—of the noblest order in particular—to endeavour the writing of music to fit his verses. When most felicitous it is but saucing honey with sugar; and to misfit beautiful words with a poor melody is to put “good meat into an unclean dish.” Of the very few songs of Browning’s, to which music has been superadded, that to the aubade, “The Year’s at the Spring” is the least misplaced; and Browning—though you might fancy that because he was not what one could believe, even on oath, to be a lyrist, and therefore more likely to become mellifluous under the magic influence of the siren Euterpe—Browning, I trow, was not sweetened to the extent of one coriander seed; and why? Because the music did not deepen the emotion springing from the words as they stood in their sweet simplicity: it served rather to weaken one’s feeling, thus becoming not merely superfluous but positively meretricious. True it is that the song I have just instanced was meant to be sung by Pippa; but if my love for her do not blind me to the truth, I think—nay, I know—that her music to it flowed spontaneously from her joyousness, and though, perhaps, it did not accord with rules of art, yet, like the after-years’ crooning of some long-unheard-of, almost-forgotten, ballad by one’s old nurse, it was real music—that music born of human love that comes straight to the soul.

If it is thus with Browning, *a fortiori* is a "jangling tune" needless to the purely melodious lyrics of Tennyson, Shelley, Keats, or Swinburne. The music they require is already in their syllables; and if we have a sympathy for our English tongue, whether we will it or no, and whether or not we are musical, the melody will come, as well into the solitude of our thought as into the publicity of our utterance of the words. It is inherent in them, and an essential part of the quality that distinguishes poetry from—with apologies for the word—poetastry. I do not wish to be misunderstood as saying that music cannot be happily adapted to poetry. Longfellow, in the hands of a capable composer, is still Longfellow, and much of his verse lends itself to adequate musical setting. He had not the subtle language sense of Tennyson or Shelley. He did not pack his lines so closely with meaning, nor had he, like Shelley, a philosophy to propound; nor did he, as Tennyson, concentrate in his work the expression of the life, progress, and aspirations of a nation. His strength seems rather to have consisted—and herein he was a true poet—in discerning the poetry that exists in the ordinary routine of life, and in exhibiting it to others in a poetical manner. Hence he appealed to the more superficial emotions of mankind—the domesticated emotions as distinguished from the *feræ naturæ* of passion; and hence, the music being, of course, appropriate, his verse was quite as effective with music as without.

Our great dramatist and human compendium of universal knowledge—Shakespeare—when writing the songs in his plays, altered his style completely. In all his plays—I may say in all the plays of all the cleverest Elizabethan playwrights—you will not find a single song which deteriorates if fittingly supplied with music. Shakespeare's songs are as eloquent and happy with the music of Arne

and Bishop as either musician or lover of poetry can desire. The reason is that Shakespeare wrote purposely for music, constantly added refrains, and simplified his rhythm and his feeling; even the most touching of his songs, the beautiful, tender elegy over the unconscious Imogen, "Fear no more the heat o' the sun," being a simple, homely ballad.

Tennyson has been unfortunate in the desire of composers to trifle with his lines, and Shelley only less so. Much of the music in both cases has been experimental, and even though it may have been successful as experiment in respect of musical technique, little can be said in its favour otherwise; especially when, as regards Shelley, some of his most exquisite lyrics have been used by the cleverest and most popular English musicians with very little result. The reason for this seems to be that they are outmatched by Shelley's own verbal music, and by the picturesque imagery, the Oriental fantasies, and a fiery waywardness that musical rhythm, which has little in community with that of poetry, must invariably subdue; having, of course, in mind the thought of the very limited capacity of the best of singers, and that a good one will not, if possible, choose a song whose emotions he cannot fully express by the control of his voice.

"I once," says Mr. Addington Symonds, "asked an eminent musician—the late Madame Goldschmidt—why Shelley's lyrics were ill adapted to music. She made me read aloud to her the 'Song of Pan' and those lovely lines 'To the Night'—'Swiftly walk o'er the western wave, Spirit of Night!' then she pointed out how the verbal melody seemed to be self-sufficing in these lyrics, how full of complicated thoughts and changeful images the verse is, how packed with consonants the words are, how the tone of emotion alters, and how no one melodic phrase could be found to fit the dædal woof of the poetic emotion.

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
 Star inwrought !
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of day,
 Kiss her until she be wearied out—

“ ‘How different that is,’ said Madame Goldschmidt,
 ‘from the *largo* of your Milton—

Let the bright Seraphim, in burning row,
 Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow !

“ ‘How different it is from Heine’s simplicity—

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges
 Herz liebchen, trag’ ich dich fort.
 [On the wings of song, heart’s dearest,
 I will carry thee.]

“ ‘I can sing *them*,’ and she did sing them then and there, much to my delight ; ‘and I can sing Dryden, but I could not sing your Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats ; no, and not much of your Tennyson either. Tennyson has sought out all the solid, sharp words, and put them together ; music cannot come between ! ’ ”

So that a thought must be beaten out somewhat thin if it is to be expressed to music, because, besides contending with a pronunciation more artificial and difficult in song than in speech, the singer’s voice has to express emotion, not in the tones most natural to such expression, but in sounds more or less arbitrary, and, possibly, foreign to the emotion. The difficulty of singing Shelley’s verse is thus readily appreciable.

In concluding, I do not by any means decry the ability of musicians, but only their choice of words when they fix upon those of such a poet as Shelley. In choosing words to set to music, it should be borne in mind that in good hands a song can always be poetical, but good poetry often makes only a poor song.



EDWIN WAUGH.
AN ESTIMATE AND A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BY GEORGE MILNER.

(NOTE.—*The substance of the following paper forms the Introduction to a new edition of the Works of Edwin Waugh, recently published in eight volumes by Mr. JOHN HEYWOOD, MANCHESTER.*)

I.

THE recent publication of the Works of Edwin Waugh, in a form so extended as to occupy eight volumes, furnishes a fitting opportunity for the reconsideration of his claims and for placing on record some slight sketch of his life.

The distinction between national and provincial literature has never been clearly laid down. That distinction is probably incapable of anything like accurate definition. It is not merely a question of subject. There are writers who have taken rank with the highest, notwithstanding the essentially local character of their material; on the other hand, there are men who will always be classed as provincial although their themes are of the most general and cosmopolitan character. It is the power which a writer displays, rather than the particular nature of his subject, which determines acceptance; and, in the long run, it is acceptance mainly which fixes his position in the open

field of letters. Waugh's case, however, is peculiar. Any valid estimate of his merits must proceed upon the assumption that he is provincial. He never regarded himself as anything else. He is intentionally and deliberately local. His subjects all spring, so to speak, from his native soil ; and he is always at his best when he uses the dialect of the county in which he was born. In short, he asked for no higher honour than to be entered on the roll of Lancashire writers ; and among these he holds a place of undisputed eminence.

I am not disposed to admit that what is now being said should be regarded as, in any sense, a depreciation. In choosing his line he acted wisely. In all honesty of purpose he delivered the message that was in him, after such fashion as was natural to his genius ; and, granting this standpoint, he did his work well. To do this, and to have taken high rank among local men, is surely better than to have passed into the unnumbered and undistinguished throng of third-rate writers. But there is another consideration. Such books as his are not without their influence on the literature of the country ; for, just as the rural population gives bone and sinew to the dwellers in the city, so those ideas which are often sneered at as provincial, and those dialectal forms of speech which are ignorantly regarded as vulgar, bring the qualities of freshness and vigour into writing which has become enervated by a too assiduous cultivation of what are called the graces of style. It would be invidious to specify modern instances, but we are all familiar with certain literary exquisites who, if they only knew what was good for them, would take a short course of study in the rugged and nervous dialect of Lancashire.

It was worth while, therefore, to re-issue the prose and verse of Edwin Waugh. We know how valuable, for instance, is a good county history, not only to those who belong to the county itself, but also to the general reader,

and to the national historian. Of equal value, at least, when considered as historical material simply, and apart from their literary quality, are the tales, sketches, and poems of Waugh; for there one may find, in irregular form it is true, and with certain limitations, a singularly accurate picture of what rural Lancashire was like during the middle third of the nineteenth century—a period of stress and storm and change.

I am quite conscious that in his work much inferior matter will be found. Waugh often wrote for bread and against time, and his profuse use of "padding," as well as his constant repetitions, are often of the most provoking kind. The reader, however, may be assured for his consolation that he will often find embedded in a commonplace and unpromising page some vivid delineation of character, some quaint and pithy proverb, some suggestive piece of folk-lore, some world-wide touch of nature, or some richly humorous story told in few and simple words.

In estimating the value of his prose I should say that its first characteristic is its obvious sincerity and genuineness. He is fond of quoting long passages of antiquarian history, but he never describes either nature or man at second-hand. The thing he writes down is the thing he saw or felt. He does not seem to think about style except, perhaps, when he is describing a sunset; he exercises but little art in the arrangement of his material; and his usual error is on the side of redundancy, for he sets forth everything with an almost youthful love of minute detail.

Although, as I have already said, his most satisfactory work is in the dialect, it must not be supposed that his literary English is without distinction. The quality of idiomatic strength which is characteristic of all good dialectal writing communicates itself to his ordinary speech. When he wishes, for instance, to describe the country around Manchester, he calls it "The green selvedge of our

toilful district." The twilight is "the edge of dark." "At the edge of dark I bade adieu to Tim's cottage." A tall man is "long-limbed," and a gaunt man is "raw-boned." The following passage is a fair specimen of his prose. "It was in that pleasant season of the year when fresh buds begin to appear upon the thorn, when the daisy, and the celandine, and the early primrose, peep from the ground, that I began to long for another stroll through my native vale up to the top of Blackstone Edge, Those mountain wastes are familiar to me. When I was a child, they rose up constantly in sight, with a silent, majestic look. The sun came from behind them in the morning, pouring its flood of splendour upon the busy valley, the winding river and its little tributaries; and oft as opportunity would allow I rushed towards them; for they were kindly and congenial to my mind."* He is familiar with all the wild flowers of Lancashire, and often makes a nosegay of them for the decoration of his pages. The following beautiful passage occurs in the *Besom Ben Stories*, and is used with considerable effect as a contrast to the rough humour by which it is surrounded. "Near the Bridge Ben left the main road, and turned up a green lane. It was hemmed in by old sprawling hedges, thickly clothed in the wild luxuriance of the season; a rambling fretwork of many-patterned foliage, pranked all over with floral prettiness—the rich overflow of nature's festal cup of beauty. A posied crowd of hedge-plants were gathered there at the year's great holiday. Thyme, and mint, and mugwort; docks, and sorrel, and nettles, and cotton-flowered thistles; the purple privet; the tall, proud foxglove, with its gaudy bell; the wilding rose, and yellow agrimony; the solemn dark crimson-tinted hound's-tongue; and the little blue

* *Lancashire Sketches.* "Rochdale to the Top of Blackstone Edge."

forget-me-not; burdock, and the lilac-flowered mallow, and the pretty harebell, with its pendant trembling cup; the golden-flowered broom—beautiful crest of the Plantagenet kings; and the scarlet pimpernel that shuts its flower at noon, and tells the watchful farmer what sort of weather's in the wind. Trailing honey-suckles, with their creamy sweet-scented flowers; and the rambling bramble, with its small white rose and 'gauzy satin frill'—the fairy's night-cap—peeping out prettily on long, flexile sprays; and here and there a thick-leaved tree, growing by the lane side, hung over all its friendly robe of green."

Of his dialectal work it is impossible to speak too highly. There he moves without restraint, and in an element that is entirely congenial to him. He never once strikes a false note. His rustic dialogues are always in dramatic harmony, and are as true in sentiment and in verbal form as if they had been taken down word for word upon the spot. His dialect is not the result of philological study; he has no preconceived notions of what it ought to be, or of how it ought to correspond with our Early English, but it is absolutely true and inevitable. He never seeks for a dialectal word or phrase; it comes unsought because it is his native speech. What William Barnes says of himself in reference to his Dorset dialect is entirely applicable to Waugh—"To write in what some may deem a fast out-wearing speech-form may seem as idle as the writing one's name in snow of a spring day. I cannot help it. It is my mother tongue, and it is to my mind the only true speech of the life that I draw."* Although, as I have indicated, Waugh's dialect does not rest upon an academic base, to the philologist it is invaluable. It is the purest form of Lancashire Folk-speech—much purer, for instance, than that of John

* Preface to *Poems of Rural Life*, by William Barnes. Third Collection. Second Edition.

Collier,* which was adulterated by importations from Cheshire on the one hand and from Yorkshire on the other. The words were those which are or were actually in use; the declensions are grammatically correct; and, although the spelling is never uselessly encumbered by uncouth forms, the pronunciation is as accurately rendered as it can be without the use of phonetic symbols.

As a specimen of powerful writing and of pure dialect I would refer the reader to one of Waugh's earliest compositions—the "Ramble from Bury to Rochdale"—which appears in the *Lancashire Sketches*. Embedded in this article will be found the inimitable "Birtle Carter's Story of Owd Bodle," which has been often separately printed, and which was always a favourite reading with Lancashire audiences. The main incident of the story is grotesque even to rudeness, but the humour is of the richest kind, and the delineation of character, as well as the reproduction of dialect, are as faithful as it is possible to make them. If the general reader could only master the peculiar form of speech he would be surprised to find what power and pathos there is, for instance, in the dialogue about the "Corn Laws" and the "clemmin" of little children. Take two short specimens—"Iv they winnot gi' me my share for wortchin' for," says Jone, the Birtle Carter, "aw'll have it eawt o' some nook—if aw dunnot, d—Jone! (striking the table heavily with his fist.) They's never be clemmed at our heawse, as aw ha' si'n folk clemmed i' my time—never whol aw've a fist at th' end o' my arm!" The reply comes from the landlady of a roadside inn—"Ay, ay. If it're nobbut a body's sel', we could manage to pinch a bit, neaw and then; becose one could rayson abeawt it some bit like. But it's th' childer, mon,—it's th' childer! Th' little

* The early Lancashire writer who is best known as "Tim Bobbin."

things at look'n for it reggilar; an' wonder'n heaw it is when it doesn't come. Eh, dear o' me! To see poor folk's bits of childer yammerin' for a bite o' mheyt,—when there's noan for 'em,—an' lookin' up i' folk's faces, as mich as to say, 'Connot yo' help me?' It is enough to may make) onybody cry their shoon full!" The two sides of the old Lancashire character are here—the rudeness, the fierceness even, of the carter who, if work will not give him his share of bread, will have it by other means, and who will not see his household starve while he has "a fist at the end of his arm;" and the tenderness of the landlady, who says, that to see the children "yammerin'" for meat is enough to make us cry our shoes full of tears.

It may be observed that in these extracts two words occur which have no exact synonyms in literary English—*clemmed*, which means to *starve from hunger*, and *yammering*, which is quite untranslatable, but which may be approximately expressed by—to *cry and yearn for piteously and earnestly*. The form of *wortchin'* for *working*, of *shoon* for *shoes*, the old signs of the plural in *en* added to the verbs *look* and *wonder*, and the addition of the aspirate to the word *meat* (mheyt) to express a peculiar pronunciation may also be indicated as typical instances of careful rendering and as illustrating the points which would be brought out by an intelligent study of Waugh's dialectal writing.

II.

I have spoken, so far, only of Waugh as a prose writer. Some attempt should be made to estimate his position as a poet. Although his prose far exceeds his verse in quantity, it is upon the latter chiefly that his fame must rest. By his songs and humorous poems he first became widely known, and it is through them that he will be longest remembered. He had the instinct and the heart of a poet.

His love of nature was intense and genuine. The moorland hills "haunted him like a passion," and that alone would have compelled him, whether successfully or not, to seek expression in verse. With regard to his poems in ordinary English it may be admitted at once that they are sometimes common-place; and that, even when they rise to a higher level, all that we can venture to say of them is that they are graceful and pleasing. But in the dialect it is altogether different. There, as one might expect, the thought finds adequate and congenial expression; his singing robes are on, and though his muse may never be anything but homely, still the inspiration is genuine; and, without allowing partiality to silence the voice of criticism, we may claim for him that in the dialect, at least, he is entitled to the name of a true poet. Of course to write in a dialect is to narrow one's audience; but so much attention has been paid of late to the nature and importance of folk-speech in relation to the study of English in general that one may reasonably expect the number of those who are willing to master the difficulties of a dialect will increase rather than diminish. It is quite certain that sounder views have come into vogue, and one does not often meet now (at least among educated people) with the opinion, once so freely expressed, that all dialectal writing is necessarily synonymous with coarseness and vulgarity.

In speaking of Waugh it is natural to think of Burns, and to ask in what relation they stand towards each other. There are several minor Scottish poets—Tannahill is one of them—who have written single pieces of a finer character than anything to be found in Waugh; but, if we take the whole body of Waugh's dialectal poetry, and compare it with that of Burns, I think we may say that, although the distance between them is confessedly great,

our Lancashire moorland poet comes next in rank—not, of course, as poet pure and simple, but as a dialectal poet—to his great Scottish predecessor. Burns, by his fiery passion and his wide sympathies both with man and with the brute creatures, compelled, not Scotland only, but all English-speaking people to accept his Doric verses as their own. Waugh, of course, has neither accomplished nor attempted anything so ambitious; but he has made himself the poet of Lancashire, and, consequently, of no small or unimportant section of England. We may venture to go farther, and say that the more his verses are studied in the light of recent research the more they will be found worthy of English consideration, providing always that the reader will rid himself, first, of the prejudice to which we have already alluded, namely, that there is some innate vulgarity in a dialectal word; and, second, of the equally erroneous impression that the Lancashire dialect is not capable of expressing poetic conceptions with delicacy or force. What holds good, singular as it may seem, is, in fact, the very opposite of this, for any really fine poem, dealing with the elementary emotions, is capable of translation, without loss, into the dialect, whereas a spurious or artificial piece of verse would inevitably refuse to come within the limits of folk-speech.

Leaving out of consideration the occasional and experimental poems in the Lincolnshire dialect by Tennyson (which, by the way, are as strong as anything he ever wrote), there is no English writer in dialectal verse who comes near to Waugh except William Barnes. But Barnes is inferior to Waugh. He is more idyllic, but he has less humour, and the dramatic element in his poems is not sustained. The language is philologically correct, but the ideas expressed and the images used are often such as would not be used by the rustic persons supposed to be speaking, although they

would be quite proper to the poet himself. Into this error Waugh never falls. While Barnes frequently gives you the impression of a poet expressing himself by intention, and with great skill, in a dialectal form, Waugh seems to be setting forth the ideas natural to his characters in the only language which either he or they had at command.

III.

No writer could possibly have grown more naturally out of his surroundings than Waugh. Granted some native genius, some impulse in the blood, and the rest is obvious. The sequence of his development is transparent; he offers you no surprises, and there are in his career no unexplained triumphs. Out of the life he lived there came inevitably the books he wrote. He was born in Rochdale on the 29th of January, 1817. All his paternal ancestors were Bordermen. His great-grandfather, John Waugh, was what is known in the north country as a "statesman," and farmed his own land at Coanwood, near the village of Haltwhistle, in Northumberland. William Waugh, being a younger son of John, was apprenticed to a shoemaker and leather-dealer. At the end of his apprenticeship he travelled south, intending to reach London; but, calling in Rochdale, where he had friends, he lingered there, became attached to a Miss Grindrod, married, settled in the Lancashire town, and ultimately began business as a leather dealer on his own account. He built houses, was a man of substance, and brought up a family of three daughters and seven sons. He is described as "a quaint, staid, and persevering man, stout, and square built, dressed in brown cloth coat and breeches of the Queen Anne cut, with large buckles on his shoes, and wearing a brown wig with long curls flowing down into the neck behind." The

records which remain give you the impression that these Waughs were all men of some mark, strong both in body and mind, but with a vein of eccentricity running through them. Of the seven sons, some were of a "bookish" and mentally speculative turn. One enlisted as a marine, and was killed at the battle of Trafalgar. He is said to have been "as strong as a lion, and as broad as a pack of wool." This simile of the wool-pack is noticeable, for the words "broad as a pack of wool" would be no inapt description of Edwin Waugh, the poet. Of William's seven sons, the youngest was Edward, the father of Edwin. He followed the trade of a shoemaker, and, though a poor man, had received a good elementary education at the Rochdale Grammar School.

Waugh's maternal ancestors all came from the hills of South Lancashire. His mother was a Howarth, and was born on the moorland between Bury and Rochdale. This particular locality I have always regarded as the one place where the purest Lancashire dialect might be found, and there is very little doubt that Waugh's admirable dialect was that which his mother used, rather than that which he heard abroad; and that more than half of the shrewd sayings and pithy proverbs for which he was so famous were those which he heard from his mother's lips. Two things come out conspicuously with regard to his relatives on the mother's side—they were remarkable for musical ability and for attachment to the doctrines of John Wesley. Among them was James Leach, who published a fine set of tunes which are popularly known as "Leach's Psalmody," and John Leach, who was one of Wesley's earliest preachers, and about whom there is a note in Southey's "Life of Wesley." Waugh's own mother used to tell with pride of Wesley's visits to her father's cottage, and of how the great man had spoken kindly to her, and stroked down her

hair. Among these uncles on both sides—the Waughs, and Howarths, and Leaches, will be found, I think, the originals of the men who are so graphically described in the well-known poem of “Eawr Folk.”

Edwin Waugh was between two and three years old at the time of Peterloo, and he could just remember the coronation of George IV. He was but nine years old when his father died. Of him he had but few reminiscences, but he cherished the recollection of walking out with him at night, and being taught the names of the constellations. Up to this time the family appears to have been in fairly comfortable circumstances, but when the widowed mother was left to struggle with the business of the shoe-shop alone they soon began to feel what he calls himself, quoting from John Collier, “the iron teeth of penury.” For three years they were driven to reside in a cellar-dwelling, and knew what it was to eke out their scanty food with nettles and passion-dock, or “poor man’s cabbage,” as it is often called in Lancashire, “boiled, strained, and eaten with bacon or bacon dripping.” This poverty, however, never meant squalor or untidiness. In after life he spoke of his mother as “the most cleanly woman he had ever known, both in house and person and attire.” No reader of his works would need to be told this. Nothing comes out more strongly than his inbred hatred of dirt, and his keen sympathy with all poor, struggling, and *clean* persons.

Waugh had no schooling before he was seven years of age, but his mother taught him to read very early, and the books which his father had left were always handy on the window sill—the usual bookcase in a poor man’s cottage. In “An Old Man’s Memories”—to which I am indebted for many of the facts included in this sketch—Waugh gives a list of these books—“‘The Bible,’ ‘The Book

of Common Prayer,' 'Wesley's Hymns,' 'Baxter's Saints' Rest,' 'Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress,' 'Foxe's Book of Martyrs,' a 'Compendium of the History of England,' 'Culpepper's Herbal,' a large quarto copy of 'Barclay's Dictionary,' and a few small elementary books." All these, he says, he read with avidity, except the "Saints' Rest," which he neglected. "Barclay's Dictionary" he studied more or less every day, and upon the "Book of Martyrs" he pored so long and earnestly that he often "imagined himself living in the reign of Queen Mary." Many of Wesley's hymns he learned by heart, a venerable and kindly Welshman having offered him a penny for each hymn which he would commit to memory. Subsequently the boy's modest library was increased by the addition of an "Enfield's Speaker." This he regarded as a delightful book, probably because it would reveal for the first time something of what awaited him in the field of general literature. He carried it about with him, he says, in the daytime, and took it to bed at night.

The Rochdale in which the growing lad lived was, it should be remembered, a very different place to the town as we know it now. It was still small and picturesque. The moorland ridges were close at hand, and had not to be approached through long streets of houses; the green country could always be seen, and in the woods, within a few hundred yards of his mother's house, he could gather posies and acorns, and hear the church bells ringing curfew and chime. Quite within the town itself there was still standing the old haunted manor house of the Byrons (the author of "Childe Harold" was the last lord of the manor), a place which Waugh describes as being for him as a child "steeped in romance." Like Wordsworth, he owed much to the river of his birthplace. The Roche was his Derwent, and—

From his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice,
That flowed along his dreams.

To him it was "the fairest of all rivers." It could not be said to "blend its murmurs with his nurse's song," for no nurse watched over his gambols; but on long summer days, when yet a mere infant, he angled and paddled in it untrammelled from morning till night. Not less attractive or fruitful were the human aspects of the place. As might be expected, he came into contact with all sorts of striking and original personages—old fashioned tradesmen—bakers, chandlers, barbers, nail makers, reed makers, and inn-keepers; ancient squires, local preachers, working botanists, and self-taught mathematicians. Among such scenes and characters his earliest years were spent. Of the scenery he said "my heart warms to those wild hills as I write about them now; for I loved them when I was a lad, with a love so strong and constant that I cannot account for it on any other ground than the fact that my forefathers on both sides for many generations had been born and bred among pastoral scenery of a similar kind." His opinion of the human society among which he was thrown is expressed in the following words:—"I never knew better or happier people than the poor hard working folk among whom I lived." The town itself, and its inhabitants, and the moorland by which they were surrounded, are all touched with a loving hand in one of the best of his songs—"I've worn my bits o' shoon away."

It's what care I for cities grand,—
We never shall agree;
I'd rayther live where th' layrock sings,—
A country teawn for me!
A country teawn where one can meet
Wi' friends and neighbours known;
Where one can lounge i' th' market place,
An' see the meadows mown.

Yon moorland hills are bloomin' wild
At th' endin' o' July;
Yon woodlan' cloofs, and valleys green,—
The sweetest under th' sky;
Yon dainty rindles, dancin' deawn
Fro' th' meawntains into th' plain;—
As soon as th' new moon rises, lads,
I'm off to th' moors again.

After he was seven years of age he seems to have received a little intermittent teaching at various schools—private, national, and commercial—his mother evidently struggling to give him some sort of education. In what he calls the “exact sciences” he made no progress, but he was quick in all other kinds of learning. From school, however, he was often a truant, the attractions of the moorland and the wood being too strong for him. As was almost invariably the case with boys of his class, at the time of which we are writing, the Sunday school and the night school were called in to make up for deficiencies in day school training. At this time his mother had a shoe stall in Rochdale market, and he often had to give his help there—standing in frost and rain, as he painfully remembers, on Saturdays till nearly midnight. At twelve years of age he entered into regular employment, becoming an errand boy with a Mr. John Walker, a local preacher and printer. It was the opening of a new era in his life when he took two shillings to his poor mother, that being the amount of his first week's wage. Twelve months later his services were transferred to Mr. Thomas Holden, another Rochdale bookseller and printer. At fourteen he was apprenticed to Mr. Holden, and began to learn the art and mystery of printing. His duties were not light, for long hours of labour were then the rule. Mr. Holden's shop was opened at six in summer and seven in winter, and the hour of closing was nine at night. As junior apprentice it was his business to open the shop. To be late was an

unpardonable offence, and once in his boyish anxiety he awoke in the middle of a winter's night and made his way through snow-covered lanes to his master's shop at half-past one in the morning.

Early in his apprenticeship his range of reading widened. His appetite for knowledge had become insatiable, and he read everything he could lay his hands on, but especially histories of England and books relating to his native county. His attendance in the shop of Mr. Holden not only brought him into contact with books, but also with book-lovers. Among these was a young curate who afterwards became "Canon Raines," the well-known antiquary. In subsequent years the Canon reminded Waugh that he once found him in the shop reading by stealth the poems of George Herbert. About this time he began to read the works of John Collier and Roby's "Traditions of Lancashire." Probably these two books, more than anything else, would determine the precise line on which his own literary work was to run. He had always been fond of athletic exercises, and of long moorland walks, but the "Traditions of Lancashire" put a method into his rambles, and he visited, one after another, all the localities mentioned in Roby's volumes. These walks were taken often alone, but sometimes with a companion, at the end of the week, and extended to twenty or thirty miles, and even, on occasions, to fifty miles.

Soon after the beginning of his apprenticeship he ran away to sea in the orthodox manner, walked to Liverpool with his Sunday clothes in a bundle, starved about the docks for two or three days, and then sorrowfully tramped home again, starting at eight o'clock on a Saturday night and walking straight on eighteen miles to Warrington, eighteen more to Manchester, and eleven to Rochdale. As he passed through Salford he heard the bells ringing for

morning service. The last three miles of his journey he accomplished sitting behind a coach, which was driven by a friend, but all the rest he had walked. When he reached home his mother said he "looked ten years older—thin, tanned, and wild-eyed as a gipsy." She put him to bed, and he slept seventeen hours. The next day, sadder and wiser he went humbly back to his master's shop.

During these early years he remembers the passing of the Reform Bill, the riots of the handloom weavers (being himself an eye-witness when eight men were shot), and the inception of the co-operative movement in Rochdale. He heard Robert Owen lecture, and had something to do with the founding of a working men's institute, where lectures and classes were mingled with fencing, tea-parties, and dancing, and in connection with which a manuscript magazine was started, Waugh being appointed editor. When he was little more than fourteen there came the inevitable "first love." The object of the young poet's affection was a country girl who lived on the edge of the town in a small cottage which was to him "a little heaven of bright cleanliness and sweet, simple, virtuous life." There is no need to tell the story. It is unmistakably written out in his beautiful poem—"The Sweetheart Gate."

There's mony a gate eawt of eawr town end,—
 But nobbut one for me ;
 It winds by a rindlin' wayter side,
 An' o'er a posed lea ;
 It wanders into a shady dell ;
 An' when I've done for th' day,
 I never can sattile this heart o' mine,
 Beawt walkin' deawn that way.

The later portion of Waugh's life may be more briefly summarised. To gain some idea of what these early years were like seemed to me essential, because it is easy to reach the conclusion that, by the time he was twelve years of

age, he had seen and registered almost every character which he afterwards delineated, and that at twenty he had practically completed his literary equipment so far as material was concerned.

Waugh's apprenticeship ended about 1839. For a time he travelled through the country as a journeyman printer, in search of work, finding temporary employment at Warrington, Much Wenlock, Wolverhampton, and elsewhere. He then spent five or six years in the printing offices of London and the provinces, and subsequently returned to his old employer in Rochdale with whom he remained for about three years. During this period he lived at an old farmhouse called Peannock or Pea-nook, close by the western shore of Hollingworth Lake, under Blackstone Edge. This entailed a three miles walk out and in, morning and evening; but he felt himself repaid for this labour by the lonely beauty of the locality, and by the quaint, old-fashioned, superstitious people with whom his residence at Peanock brought him in contact.

About 1847 Waugh gave up his work as an operative printer and came to Manchester, having obtained the post of Assistant Secretary to the Lancashire Public School Association, Mr. Francis Espinasse, the author of "*Lancashire Worthies*," being his chief. Shortly after this time he made his first appearance as a professional writer, being engaged to contribute a series of articles to the columns of a Manchester newspaper. In 1855 he issued his first volume of prose, under the title of "*Sketches of Lancashire Life and Localities*." It was in 1856, when he was nearly forty years of age, that he wrote his most popular song—"Come whoam to the childer an' me." It was the outcome of a happy inspiration, and the first sketch of it was scribbled on the leaves of a pocket-book in the coffee-room of the old Clarence Hotel, in Spring Gardens,

Manchester. This original draft is in the possession of the Manchester Literary Club. The song was first published in the *Manchester Examiner*. Subsequently David Kelly, a bookseller with literary tastes, printed it upon a card, and gave it to the customers who frequented his shop. Its popularity was immediate and almost unparalleled. Issued as a broadsheet, and sold at a penny, the demand for it was enormous, not in Lancashire only, but all over England and in the Colonies. Miss Burdett-Coutts ordered some ten or twenty thousand copies for gratuitous distribution, and the *Saturday Review* spoke of it as "one of the most delicious idylls in the world—so full of colouring, yet so delicate, so tender, and so profoundly free from artifice." At one bound the writer found himself famous; and, impelled by his unexpected success, he produced during the following two or three years his best songs in the dialect. These were collected and published in 1859. Before this time a second edition of his "Lancashire Sketches" had been issued. For some years after relinquishing the secretaryship of the Lancashire School Association, he acted as "townsman" or "traveller" for a well-known printing firm in Manchester. With this avocation he combined the selling of his own books, carrying them about with him in a large blue bag. Ten years before, Sam Bamford, the author of "Passages in the Life of a Radical," had done the same thing, offering his wares with a stalwart independence which was very amusing.

During the years with which we are now dealing a small but notable Club was founded in Manchester under the name of the "Shandeans." It lived for four or five years, and Waugh was one of its most conspicuous members. Besides the daily dinner, there were small meetings in the evening between five and seven, and a larger gathering on Saturday night from six to ten. The practice of the Club

was "plain living and high thinking," and the first rule was that every man should pay his own reckoning. I am indebted to Mr. John H. Nodal for the following graphic sketch of the Club and its members. "The Shandeans never numbered more than twelve, among whom were Francis Espinasse, then editor of the *Manchester Weekly Advertiser*; Edwin Waugh, 'our aboriginal genius,' as Espinasse used to call him; John Stores Smith, author of "Mirabeau," and "Social Aspects"; James Cannan; Frank Jewsbury, brother of Mrs. Fletcher and Miss Geraldine E. Jewsbury, the novelist; John H. Nodal; William H. Currie, an impetuous and perfervid Scot, who, like Thomas Carlyle, was a native of Ecclefechan, and immensely proud of the fact; Theophilus Pattisson, secretary of the Cobden Testimonial Fund; and Thomas, always called Tom, Henderson, when he wasn't called 'Chalk Tom,' an artist who made a modest competency by his portraits drawn in coloured chalks. He was the honorary secretary of the Club, and a most remarkable personality. Many notable men of letters from London dropped in from time to time, and were made welcome to the modest fare of the Shandeans. It was a delightfully happy time, for most of the men were in the heyday of youth and spirits. Manchester then was a comparatively quiet place. There were no suburbs to speak of; music had not taken the start which dated from the Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857; and local artists were very few. Waugh was our chief singer. 'Brave Chanticleer salutes the Morn' was one of his favourite ditties in those days; and when he came to the chorus—

Hark forward, hark forward, tantivy,
Hark forward, away! Tantivy, huzza!—

raising his churchwarden, and flourishing it like a baton, he led a rolling response of amazing volume and vigour.

Then later, about 1854 or 1855, when we were in the midst of the Crimean War, he wrote a couple of patriotic songs, 'God bless thee, Old England,' and 'Ye Gallant Men of England,' and he was wont to be often called upon to chant the last-named, ending

The race of island lions,
Bred by the Western main,
The freedom won by battles
By battle can maintain ;

always to the accompaniment of a stormy chorus. There were other singers, of course, but Waugh was our chief in that line. I am often reminded, when I recall those days and nights, of Thackeray's description in 'The Newcomes' of the Haunt in the Soho, frequented by Pendennis and Clive and Fred Bayham, and a dozen or score of the newspaper men, authors, and artists of that time." Only three of the Shandeans now remain—Francis Espinasse, James Cannan, and John Nodal.

In a few years after the extinction of the Shandeans, namely, in 1862, the Manchester Literary Club was started on somewhat similar lines, Waugh being one of the six founders. The others were Joseph Chatwood, Charles Hardwick, John Page, Benjamin Brierley, and R. R. Bealey. Among those who attended the early meetings of the Club there may be mentioned the patriarchal Bamford, Charles Swain, the polished poet, John Harland, the antiquary, and John Cameron, the author of many poems and philosophical essays. In 1876 Waugh became a vice-president, and remained in that office until his death. Several of his papers and poems were read before the Club, but his contributions more frequently took the form of humorous monologue, or snatches of song deliciously rendered from his own published poems.

The old complaint about the neglect of genius and the withholding of recognition until it has become too late is

not applicable in Waugh's case. In Rochdale, his native town, he had a few detractors, but even there he had many old acquaintances who were loyal in their attachment; and in Manchester, where he made his home for the greater part of his mature life, honour and "troops of friends" always awaited him. This was creditable alike to himself and to his contemporaries. From about the year 1860 Waugh's income depended entirely upon his pen, and upon occasional public readings from his own works. The uncertainty of such labour is too well known, and it became apparent to those who knew him most intimately that the strain had begun to tell upon his health. At this juncture (in 1876) a committee was formed which took over his various copyrights and guaranteed him in return a fixed annual income. The advantages of this arrangement were obvious. It assisted him on the purely commercial side of authorship, relieved him from anxiety, and left him at liberty to pursue the variously literary projects upon the accomplishment of which he had set his mind. The present Lord Derby was a liberal contributor to this fund, and the response, which all over Lancashire was made to the appeal of the committee, was of such a character as to prove the high estimation in which Waugh was held in his own county. In 1880 he was invited as the chief guest to the Christmas Supper of the Literary Club. On that occasion he found himself surrounded by an enthusiastic gathering of old friends, and his health was drunk with every demonstration of sincere regard. In 1882 Mr. Thomas Reed Wilkinson offered to the Corporation of Manchester a fine portrait of the poet painted by Mr. William Percy. "It is fitting," said the donor, in writing to the Mayor, "that the municipality of Manchester, beginning, as it is, to manifest an interest in art, should possess a portrait of this man of genius, whose name will

descend to posterity, honoured not here only, but wherever Lancashire people make their homes." The portrait was gratefully accepted, and hung in the public gallery of the city. In the following year a Memorial on behalf of Waugh promoted by the Literary Club and supported by all the members for Lancashire, irrespective of political opinion, was presented to Mr. Gladstone, with the result that Waugh's name was placed on the Civil List and a yearly pension of £90 awarded to him. In 1887 the poet reached his seventieth birthday, and the event was celebrated by a dinner at the Queen's Hotel in Manchester. Mr. T. R. Wilkinson presided over a large and brilliant gathering. In responding to the toast of his health, Waugh said he "found himself surrounded by many of his oldest and best friends—men whose kindness to him through a long course of years had 'known no winter,' and he could assure them that such a gathering at his time of life was a thing that would touch any heart that was at all capable of emotion. A meeting like that made amends for many of the struggles and difficulties of early life. He had no disposition, however, to look back over his shoulder complainingly into the past, or to recall the struggles of the earlier time. They were gone, but they had left no bitterness with him." From these slight records it will be seen how completely Waugh escaped the prophet's proverbial fate. Even in his own country he was abundantly honoured.

From 1881 to 1883 he was occupied (in conjunction with the Copyright Committee already mentioned) in carrying through the press a complete edition of his works in ten volumes. After this date he wrote little in verse for several years; but about 1888 a second spring seemed to fall upon his muse, and he sent forth in quick succession a new series of poems. These were first published singly in the

columns of the *Manchester Guardian*, and in 1889 they were issued, along with a few earlier verses, in a volume which formed the eleventh of the collected edition. Taken as a whole, these later poems were by no means equal to his earlier work, but there were some fine pieces among them which proved that the old hand had not entirely lost its cunning,

When Waugh was about sixty, his health began to show signs of serious failure. I remember his complaining to me that the close air of the street in Manchester where he resided felt as if it would choke him in the night. He pined for the breeze of the hills, and removed to Kersal Moor, a suburb of the city, where he found the nearest approach to the kind of scenery which he loved so much. Here he remained for some years. He had comfortable apartments in an hotel, and seemed fairly happy among his books and papers, but his nerves were unstrung, and he fell into a despondent mood. At this time he regarded his death as imminent; and, as a last resource, he determined to try the neighbourhood of the sea, which had always had for him a fascination second only to that of the moorland. He removed to New Brighton on the estuary of the Mersey. Here he secluded himself from all society, and for months walked along the sands for seven hours a day silent and solitary. This self-directed course of treatment, as he told me, saved his life for a time and re-invigorated his mind. A new and serious trouble, however, arose. He complained of an affection in the tongue. Ultimately it proved to be cancer, and incurable. More than one operation was performed, but with only partial success. He suffered intense pain, but he bore up bravely, and was even cheerful and jocose. In 1886 he wrote to his old friend, John Page—"I am mending a little every day; and I can hobble about for two or three

hours together in the sunshine—when there is any. As my friend, Professor Taylor, says, I used to *give* them a bit of my tongue now and then, but they have *taken* a bit this time. I can't talk much now, certainly, but I dare say I shall be able to make myself sufficiently disagreeable with a slate and pencil." In his distress many friends came closely round him, and did all that was possible to alleviate his sufferings. Dr. Sam Buckley took charge of his case, and provided gratuitously not only surgical attendance, but a room and a skilled nurse in his own house, so that he might have his patient constantly under his immediate care. The late John Bullough, of Accrington, was also unremitting in his kindness, and removed him as often as was possible to his fine Highland estate, in Glenlyon. During these visits to Scotland I had many letters from him which showed that, although he was gradually sinking, his delight in mountain scenery, and his appreciation of the humorous side of character as he found it in Highland shepherds, fishermen, and game-keepers, was as keen as ever.

At length he came home to die. Mr. T. R. Wilkinson and myself saw him a few days before the end. Loving hands were doing all that was possible to smooth his last hours. He was unable to speak, but he wrote frequently on tablets. His last words to me were—"Write me a bit of a note now and then—not a long one—and let it be delivered here first thing in a morning. It cheers me up for the day." There was little opportunity after this visit for the sending of letters. He died on the 30th of April, 1890, in the seventy-third year of his age. His remains were brought back to Manchester. It was well that it should be so, for his wish was to lie at last among us. Though the seashore at New Brighton added much happiness to his later years, his thoughts were always in Man-

chester. When near the end, and when his mind began to wander a little, he said, imperatively, "Dress me, and take me to Manchester." Alas! he was destined to come no more, except in his last robes. He was buried on Saturday, May 3rd, at Kersal Church. The public funeral, which was accorded him was especially gratifying to his large and deeply-attached circle of personal friends, as well as to all those who were interested in local literature. The great success of the demonstration was hardly anticipated. "We must not expect a large gathering," it was said, "for the number of persons who have any interest in poets, and particularly in provincial poets, is, after all, very small." But apparently there were more who cared about our dear old singer than we thought. The crowd was large, representative, and sympathetic, at the railway station, on the line of route, and at Kersal. It was pleasant to see Manchester represented in its corporate capacity by the Mayor. The Mayor of Salford also joined the procession, and all the surrounding towns sent their contingents—Rochdale, Oldham, Ashton, and Saddleworth. The workman was there conspicuously. I noticed one rough-looking labourer who followed all the way—some two or three miles—with a child holding by either hand. Such men as he felt that the poet was one of their own class, that he knew their lives from within, and that, inarticulate themselves, in his pages their sorrows, their simple joys, their limited aspirations found a voice. The services at the church and at the graveside were conducted by Canon Crane and Prebendary Macdonald, assisted by the organist and choir of the Manchester Cathedral. One of the hymns was the same as that which was sung at Samuel Bamford's funeral in Middleton Church; several of those who acted as pallbearers for the older poet performed the same sad office for Edwin Waugh. Canon Crane's address struck the

right note—it was that of a man speaking to men. The scene at the grave was very impressive. Conspicuous among those veterans whose eyes were wet with tears as the solemn words of sorrow—sorrow not without hope—were tenderly chanted by the choir was Mr. Alexander Ireland, who had ever been a most kindly and sympathetic helper. His old friend, John Page, had brought sprigs of rosemary for the mourners, and when all was over and each had cast his bunch of herbs upon the coffin, with the familiar words—"That's for remembrance," we turned to face a world which seemed colder and darker for the loss of dear Edwin Waugh.

IV.

No better resting-place than Kersal could have been found for Waugh. He lies on the edge of the moorland. The sun will shine freely on his grave and the moorland wind will blow over it; and that is well, for, as we have already said, no description fits him better than that of "The Moorland Poet." The love of the moorland was in his blood, and very curiously its characteristics were reproduced in his personality. His nature was large and healthy, broad and breezy, robust and strong. Sturdy independence was the *note* of his appearance. To use one of his own phrases—"He had not much bend in his neck." He walked with a slow firm step, and with his large hands spread out. He affected huge sticks, of which he had an immense collection, and he liked to throw a shepherd's plaid over his shoulder. His face, which was marked by quiet humour, was always ready to take a genial expression even when at its saddest; and, in a mirthful mood, it beamed all over with laughter. Like Bamford, he had the ease and natural manners of a born gentleman—a gentleman of the older sort, and his bearing showed no timidity or restraint in the presence of persons who were socially

his superiors. No man had less of the morbid and puling poet about him. He was fond of clothing himself in honest homespun of the thickest texture, and of wearing huge broad-soled boots, guiltless of polish. It was not often that he attempted to get into evening dress, and when he did the attempt was only partially successful, and the result ludicrous. He was too large for such things, and always looked as if his next breath would burst his sable fetters. It used to be said that some one who went into his bedroom one morning found his tweed suit standing up on end in the middle of the floor without support; and I have heard him convulse a quiet household by giving, in a vein of richest humour, elaborate instructions overnight to the maid, about not having his boots spoiled with blacking.

Some years ago, while his voice yet remained to him, he was a fine reader of his own works. He never dramatised, but his intonation of the dialect, and his sympathy with the character he was delineating, were always perfect. Those who heard him sing were fortunate; though not a musician, he had a good ear for music, and a voice which, if it was not strong, was sweet and bird-like in its warbling. I feel sure that somebody must have sung old ballads to him when he was a child.

However fine his humour was, as shown in his printed works, it was as nothing when compared to his power as a story-teller with the living voice. I have never known his superior in this when the fit was on him and the surroundings congenial. He would take a slight hint or some bald anecdote, and work upon it extemporaneously, by the process which is best described as "piling-on," and yet with artistic suppression, until his hearers were almost suffocated with insupportable laughter. He had a large amount of very vigorous English at his disposal, and for purposes of obfuscation it was particularly handy. His power of

picturesque phrasing, both in conversation and with his pen, was very striking. Curious felicity of expression was certainly one of his gifts. He could always hit the right word, and often he could concentrate a page into a single happy sentence. I was once walking with him and other friends on the slopes of Pendle, and, coming to a gate which must be climbed or crept through, a member of the party who was distinguished for his knowledge of antiquities, chose to draw his slender body through the bars rather than run the risk of mounting. While the feat was proceeding, Waugh, standing a little distance away, struck an attitude, and, spreading out his large hands, as his manner was, said: "Look at him! By the mass, he's like an antiquarian ferret wriggling through a keyhole!"

I have already spoken of the books which most largely influenced him in his youth. To the list should be added "Anderson's Cumberland Ballads. He says himself that these "rare and racy songs" gave a strong fillip to the natural inclination which he had in the direction of such things. I do not think he had read widely in modern literature, but he knew well his "Shakespeare" and his "Milton," the "Border Ballads, and "Robert Burns." His literary method was peculiar. Nearly all his sketches centre round a story. The story was the germ, not the decoration. At one time the walls of the room he worked in were covered all over with stories, and hints for stories, in type and in manuscript. These were stuck up with pins. He knew exactly where each of them was, and as he used them up they were taken from the wall. If any of his friends made him the recipient of a good story it was certain to come back to them in print before long, embellished with characteristic additions.

Waugh never attempted a continuous or regularly-constructed story, but among his papers I find a pretty

elaborate sketch for a projected novel. The time is laid early in the nineteenth century; the scene is the town of Rochdale, and the historical subject is the struggles and sufferings of the working-class in the early period of the cotton manufacture. Among the real characters to be introduced were John Bright, John Roby, Sam Bamford, and several of Wesley's early preachers. A few of Waugh's personal friends are also included under thin disguises. Among his unaccomplished projects I find, in addition, a sketch of a little play called "The Cobbler's Bottle," which was evidently intended to be a Lancashire version of "The Taming of the Shrew."

His best written instance of what I have called "piling-on" will be found in the "Lancashire Volunteers." His best piece of rough humour is "The Birtle Carter's Story of Owd Bodle;" but "Besom Ben" is incomparably his finest all-round piece of prose. In it humour and pathos, tenderness and rollicking fun alternate, and are artistically heightened by the introduction, as a background, of quiet sketches of inanimate nature, done with a master-hand, and in polished English.

The serious side of his character and his intense love of the quiet country are best seen, I think, in the sketch called "Heywood and Its Neighbourhood." It is in this piece that a beautiful passage about his mother and his early days may be found—"Through the parlour window I watched these little companies of country children—so fresh, so glad, and sweet-looking—and as they went their way I thought of the time when I, too, used to start from home on a Sunday morning, dressed in my holiday suit, clean as a new pin from top to toe, and followed to the door with a world of gentle admonitions. I thought of some things I learned when standing at my mother's knee; of the little prayer and the blessing at bedtime; of the old solemn tunes which she

used to sing when all the house was still, whilst I sat and listened, drinking in those plaintive strains of devotional melody never to forget them more." With this pleasant picture we may close our slight record. The child was father of the man, and the influence of his mother's simple piety is unmistakable in his work. Through all his passages of boisterous humour there is never found either immoral taint or sinister suggestion. His books, like his bodily presence and his better self, are conspicuously clean and healthy. His real worth may be estimated by the number of those who loved him when living, and who honour him now that he is gone. Few men possessed in a higher degree the faculty of gaining friends; but he had also that much rarer gift which enables a man to keep them when they have been gained.





MACBETH.

BY JAMES T. FOARD.

I PROPOSE on this occasion to invite attention to one of the noblest works of artistic genius that has been produced during the countless generations in which the world has been occupied by civilised men. I offer you, therefore, no apology for my choice of theme, but I do for my temerity in undertaking to deal with it.

The play of "Macbeth" has been described by so enlightened and discriminating a critic as the poet Campbell as "an unparalleled lecture in ethical anatomy which will endure, as a monument of Genius, as long as our language remains."

Under these circumstances the attempt to present some features of its production and history, its design, purpose, and philosophy, its allusions, origin, and construction, as well as an analysis of the character of its leading personages (how partial and imperfect so-ever) may neither be without interest or advantage.

To those who imagine that our national poet was only a playwright and theatrical manager, who wrote to fill his playhouse and amuse, I address myself. I also appeal to

those who believe him a great poet and thinker, and no artist. He is our national poet only because he is our greatest artist—the greatest exemplar of all true art. As the noblest artist he must necessarily be our chiefest teacher, for, as Sir Philip Sidney pointed out in his “Apology for Poetry,” the poets are first among the true teachers of mankind. The legislator can neither make men wise nor good. He punishes them for being bad. The poet, by showing us the image of virtue, teaches us and instructs us in virtue, for to see what is virtuous is to admire, which is the first step to emulation. The poets teach by example: example, illustrated in action, and enforced not merely by precept, but by vivid and natural representation, and thus, as Sidney suggests, being chief in efficacy, they are first, also, in delightfulness and persuasion.

I make these remarks by way of preface to the few jottings I am about to place before you, not so much to excuse as to explain why I have selected this particular play—this realistic picture of vice and crime and not of virtue—for treatment in this paper. It is because, among other reasons, it is an unimpeachable and vivid moral lesson, and also one of the noblest productions of the greatest poet and literary artist of all time.

We have not heretofore, perhaps, considered Shakespeare in his attitude as a great artist, poet, and teacher. We are not prepared to think of him, with the late Mr. Justice Talfourd, as “the profoundest thinker, the wittiest, the airiest, the most fantastic spirit, reconciling the extremes of ordinary natures, that ever condescended to teach and amuse mankind.” We are not prepared to receive him as the simple illustrator of the noblest code of morals the world has known. As the first creator of the loftiest ideal of feminine virtue, as portrayed in Imogen, in Portia (Brutus’s

wife), in Desdemona, and in Cordelia, or of the highest conceivable purity in domestic, as distinguished from so-called heroic life. Nor do we at all times consider that he is also the painter of the most exalted manly virtue, as shown in Brutus, Antonio, Leonato, Horatio and Prospero. And yet this is the aspect in which I desire you to regard him.

I propose to illustrate his teaching, as I have already suggested, in quite an adverse manner. Not as instructing us, by presenting to our view the image of a pleasant prosperous, or properly requited virtue; but by offering for our consideration the misery, the terrors, the penalties even of successful crime, not as a model to admire, but as a beacon to warn and repel.

The play of "Macbeth," although written and produced under peculiar circumstances, was, of course, primarily composed to interest and amuse the public, or in other words, fill the Globe Theatre. Having this object, had it been the work of an ordinary playwright, its intention would have been fulfilled when that purpose was achieved. But with a great artist, the result is changed. It was necessary that the play should be true to nature, and so far as history was authentic, in the remote period in which the drama was cast, true also to history, and to the manners, customs, and habits of the times. It was not necessary to its construction, but inevitable to its treatment by a master mind that, being compelled by tradition and the nature of the story to deal with sorcery, witchcraft, and divination, that that master mind should treat such a theme with the dignity proper to himself, and with an elevation consonant with all his work. The story to be illustrated was in great part forced upon him, but its moral was in his own hands. That moral is primarily, that success in evil intention is failure and punishment in

achievement. That the attainment of aim often involves such conclusion as the moth finds in the candle, which lures him only to misery and death.

Do not, I pray, for a moment misunderstand me, and believe that I suggest that Shakespeare when he was writing a play supposed it was a sermon, or that he had any idea of writing even a moral play. Or that his object was the inculcation of virtue or teaching the folly of vice. His first object may have been perhaps, to gratify his patron and employer, the King; his next to fill his theatre and write a popular play. But a great artist is constrained by his art. He is compelled, whether he has or has not a purpose, to gratify himself, and to satisfy his own artistic cravings and instincts. And the artist, whether sculptor, poet, dramatist, or painter, who works to gratify his own desires and ideal in art, rather than the caprices or vitiated tastes of the day, is the only candidate for immortality. For present prosperity in art, or popularity, may be generally spelled as ultimate perdition.

It is not necessary to go into the causes, but one of the first things I could wish to emphasise to you is that this marvellous tragedy of "Macbeth," which is the wonder and admiration of the whole civilised world for its eloquent force, vivid imagery, and scenic horror in representation, fell dead upon the town. Whether the play was also discredited by the Court, not from want of merit, but from some unlucky references in the text, notably, one by Lennox, cannot be known. In "The Gowrie Tragedy," for which it was, as I shall show, substituted, the two Ruthvens who could have explained the charge made against them after their death, had they been allowed to live, were cruelly and peremptorily slain by Ramsay, and these lines in the tragedy might have been held too allusive—

It was for Malcolm, and for Donaldbain,
 To kill their gracious father ! damned fact !
 How it did grieve Macbeth ! did he not straight,
 In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,

Was not that nobly done ? Ay, and wisely too ;
 For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive,
 To hear the men deny it.

Macbeth was written and produced in May or June, 1606. The precise date of its production is marked by an allusion in it which is beyond question or dispute. But it was so absolutely a failure that, so far as we know, it was never played again, save possibly and problematically on the 20th of April, 1610, until long after the poet's death. Its failure settled once and for ever the value of popular verdicts on questions of art. It was not printed. No rogue even thought it good enough to pirate, as they had generously thought of other of the poet's plays, and it remained in MSS. until 1623, having been tampered with in the meanwhile with a view to its production in a more popular form.

I have mentioned that the poet's first anxiety was probably to gratify his patron the King. It will be necessary to explain this feature of the construction of the drama, because this will elucidate in great part the author's reason for the selection of a Scotch story, which he had not before hazarded. Also why the entire plot hinges on witchcraft, apparitions, and necromancy. Why it treats of the murder of an anointed king. Why its scenery and incidents, with so much minute accuracy and propriety as to the relative distances of Dunsinane Hill, Birnam Wood, etc., are placed in Scotland. Why it refers in the third scene of the fourth act to the cure of scrofula by "touching for the evil." Why it refers to the last dying words of Garnet, the head of the Jesuits in England, then recently

executed, viz., in May, 1606; and why it, among other things, refers to the fabled and apocryphal descent of James I., from Fleance, the son of Banquo, the thane of Lochaber. Also why allusion is made to the recently augmented "triple sceptre" of the king, in the verse "that two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry," Act 4, sc. 1; to the price of wheat in July, 1606; the investiture of Ramsay, June 4, 1606, as Viscount Haddington, Act. 1, sc. 3, as well as other incidents, now difficult to explain.

James the First arrived in London to take possession of the Crown of England on the 3rd of May, 1603. Six days after, William Shakespeare and his company of players received their appointment as the King's Servants and Players. They received from the Crown a small annual stipend and a uniform or livery, which on State occasions it was compulsory to wear. This was the first royal appointment under the king's sign manual of any body of actors as "The King's Servants." Shakespeare and Burbage's Company had up to this period been known as the Lord Chamberlain's servants. Players, during the reign of Elizabeth, having been by royal concession allowed only to appear in public in the retinue and as followers of some great Baron or Peer, who was, more or less, responsible for their conduct and behaviour. As the Lord Chamberlain's Company, they were virtually, but not nominally, in the service of the Crown. Queen Elizabeth had no company of players, properly so-called. James I., before he came to the English Crown, appointed Shakespeare's Company, Fletcher, the poet's partner, being a Scot and Burgess of Aberdeen, his servants, in Scotland; thereby greatly shocking and perplexing the puritanic prejudices of his people. And one of his first acts, as I have indicated, on his coming to England, was to appoint, as his servants,

Shakespeare's Company, and also to assign the title of "Her Majesty's," The Queen's, and the Prince's servants to other companies he proposed to patronise.

Here, you will see, at once, a motive of obligation, to say nothing of "gratitude for favours to come," likely to influence the poet.

That it did so influence him there is no question. As early as December, 1604 (the poet, at this time, being busy, viz., in 1603, with his revised version of the Danish Story of Hamlet, in compliment to the Queen, who was the sister of the Danish King), as early, I say, as December, 1604, produced "The Tragedy of Gowrie," which turned on the suggested attempt to assassinate James himself, in August, 1600, by the two Ruthvens, John and Alexander, at the Earl of Gowrie's castle, Spey Towers, in Perth.

This play, which it can hardly be doubted was written by Shakespeare—as he was the playwright of the Company—was, unluckily, a failure. It was too near the events of the time to be palatable. A letter in Winwood's correspondence, dated December 18th, 1604, explains why it failed, and, also, that it would probably be withdrawn.

In a gossiping letter from Chamberlain,* at Court, to Winwood, at the Hague, there are these passages:—

"There is great preparation of masques and revels at Court against the marriage of Sir Philip Herbert and the Lady Susan Vere, which is to be celebrated on St. John's Day. . . . The Queen's brother, the Duke of Holst, is still here. . . . 'The Tragedy of Gowry,' with all the action and actors, hath been twice represented by the '*King's players*,' with exceeding concourse of all sorts of people. But whether the matter be not well handled, or that it be thought unfit

* "Winwood's Memorials." Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Winwood, Vol. 2, p. 41. Ed. 1725.

that Princes should be played on the stage in their lifetime, I hear that some great Counsellors (presumably Cecil) are much displeased, and so, 'tis thought, shall be forbidden."

Under these circumstances, a new play being required by the Company, the poet's first great effort to gratify his monarch being interdicted and withdrawn, it was natural that the playwright should address himself to a, if possible, more favourable theme. In October, 1605, at Oxford, the King had been greatly gratified by a masque at St. John's College, in which three youths, dressed as Nymphs (and women were all represented on the stage at this time by boys) had addressed him as the "Three Sybils or Wayward Sisters," and prognosticated a prosperous reign as ruler of three kingdoms, now for the first time united. In the dialogue presented by these three youths, who allegorically represented England, Scotland, and Ireland, and who were undoubtedly derived from the three sisters of elder world, to be found in Holinshed's history, the King was addressed as of the noble stock and offspring of Banquo, Thane of Lochaber. This compliment, and apocryphal lineage and descent, albeit remote and fabulous, if regal, undoubtedly delighted James, especially as the allusion was coupled with a suggestion of the long continuance of royal dignity and estate in his family.

Here, then, was a theme likely to suggest to the poet the subject for a drama. These three sybils, the ancient *Parcæ* or *Eumenides*, the *Valkyria* of the Scandinavian belief, who prophesied honour to Banquo's line, referred him at once to Holinshed's history for the materials for his new play. From Holinshed, in chief part, he derived them. But there was an additional and most cogent reason for the selection of this story. In 1596 James the First

had written his "Magnum Opus," a most portentous work on Demonology and Witchcraft. Witchcraft, unluckily, was at that time, and for many years after, next to hunting, the King's favourite hobby, Witch finding was his delight in life. He had signalised the first Parliamentary session in his reign by bringing in a bill, enacting all sorts of terrible punishments and penalties against witches, wizards, and necromancers generally. This measure,* brutal, cruel, and superstitious, was watched and tended with great solicitude by the King. In June and July, 1604, it was passing through the House of Commons. It became law, and under its dire penalties, between the time it was so passed and its repeal in 1736, 3,192 innocent persons were executed for withcraft and sorcery. As we know, under its baneful provisions 19 witches were burned in Lancashire in 1612, 9 at Leicester in 1616, and in Pendle Forest 17 were condemned to death in 1634, although not executed. Moreover, in consequence of the King's zealous interest in the subject witches had been especially excepted from the pardon and amnesty granted on the Royal accession in 1603, to all other offenders and malefactors.

Here, then, were some reasons for the poet's choice of a theme, but curiously, from contemporary history, I am able to furnish further proof of how gratifying such a subject as a witch story would be to the King, at this period of 1604 or 1605, and how much the Royal mind was agitated and perplexed by the subject, contained in a letter written by Sir John Harrington, the translator of Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso," a reputed wit and poet, to his friend and crony, Sir Amias Paulet. He, as a connexion of Queen

* In England there was no punishment for witchcraft at Common Law. The first statute punishing enchantment was the 33rd Henry VIII., cap. 41. This was repealed by 1 Edward VI., cap. 12. The statute of James was the 1st, cap. 12. "An Act against conjuration, witchcraft, and dealing with evil and wicked spirits."

Elizabeth and her godson, called on the King. His Majesty received him very graciously, for he delighted in scholars. I will cite substantially Sir John's words:—

“After praising his wit, and some preliminary conversation about Aristotle and Ariosto, the Royal Solomon did much press him (Sir John) for his opinion touching the power of Satan in the matter of witchcraft, and asked him with much gravity, if he did truly understand why the devil did work more with ancient women than others? Sir John evaded the question with a coarse witticism and said that the Scripture told us that the devil walked in dry places. But the monarch would not be thus foiled, and with great gravity described to Sir John at length that his mother's—Mary Queen of Scots—death and execution were visible in Scotland before they did really happen, being, as he said, spoken of in secret by those whose power of sight presented to them a bloody head dancing in the air. This gift, known as second sight, Sir John says, he, the King, did much remark on. He also said he had sought out of certain books a sure way to attain knowledge of future chances. Hereat he named many books which I did not know, nor by whom written; but he advised me not to consult some authors which would lead me to evil consultations.”*

Now apart from the general belief in witchcraft that then existed, which infected the clergy, the judges, the magistrates, and statesmen—for Chamberlain refers to armies seen in the air in a letter of about this time†—we see how specially the subject was interesting to the King. His Bill, already referred to, embodied his book and his

* *Nugæ Antiquæ*. Vol. II., p. 119, ed. 1779.

† “Winwood,” Vol. II., p. 46. Jan. 26 (1604-5). “We hear of a strange apparition lately at Berwick of two armies, that fought a long time, with horse, foot, and ordinance.”

beliefs. It dealt with and punished every species of necromancy, with the invocation of the spirits of deceased people, with the magic flight of witches, with the use of charms and philtres, and with all enchantment. In truth, just then witchcraft with the King was in the air. Was this not probably the reason for the poet's selection of his theme? It is true his witches are not vulgar, bestial, common-place people like the King's, or like the ordinary English witch, as we find that person enshrined in criminal trials, but are commanding, fearful, dignified, and elemental powers. But this is precisely what the gift of the artist and poet creator achieves. He raises dirt to dignity and vast design, turns common clay into noble monuments, and moulds unyielding stone into forms of imperishable beauty.

Those who believe that Shakespeare was not a business man, actor, and playwright, may resent the suggestion that he was influenced by such considerations as the gratification of a patron or the filling of his theatre. On the other hand, those who worship him as a poet may reflect that he was still human and the father of a family. But whether he was likely to please the King by choosing the King's favourite theme matters very little. Shakespeare did write "*Macbeth*," although some very imbecile people have doubted it, and would persuade us otherwise.

Having chosen his theme—and I will deal with this silly view that "*Macbeth*" was not written by Shakespeare later on—whence did he derive his plot and story?

The story, as I have already said, is, as to its main features, in Holinshed's History; but, as arranged by the poet, links together two periods of the annals, separated by an interval of nearly one hundred years, and two distinct and separate murders of chieftains or kings. In the year 972, King Duff or McDuff was murdered by the commander-in-chief and leader of his army, Donwald, at

Forres, near Nairn, on the north-east coast of Scotland. Duff was at the time paying a visit to Donwald, and was his guest at Forres Castle, one of the royal castles of which Donwald was the keeper. This is the story adapted by the poet to the name of "Macbeth."

Now Macbeth did not reign till some seventy years after. He was slain about 1061, at Botgosuane at the Smithy, in fight by the aid of Banquo, but whether in an ambush or surprise, openly or with treachery does not appear. He fell, however, at Enuerns (Inverness), or Botgosuane.

The narrative of the chronicler is followed strictly in the historic character of Macbeth and his most ambitious wife. He is portrayed as a wise and dignified ruler, but remorseless and cruel, after he had attained the throne; his cruelty being aggravated by the apprehension of reprisals for his own acts of barbarity. His conduct is thus described: "Macbeth governed the realm for the space of ten years with equal justice. This was but a counterfeit device, against his natural inclinations, to purchase favour. Shortly after he began to show his natural cruelty, and the prick of conscience warned (as it happeneth to tyrants) him to fear he might be served as he had served his predecessors."

His wife Gruach was equally ambitious and cruel, Holinshed, following Hector Boece or Boetius, has described her as greatly encouraging her husband to usurp the kingdom by force. "She that was very ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of a Queen." She was, as Boece suggests, "impatient of the long tary, as all women ar, specially quhare thay ar desirus of ony purpos," to attain sovereignty and thus fulfil the prophecy of the three fates or weird sisters who had appeared to her husband. And he indicates that she was eager for him to make the attempt to seize on the crown, and gave him

"*gret artation*" to this end, reproaching him as a feeble coward, afraid to grasp with manhood the prize good fortune had placed within his reach.*

Now the keynote of the play as a witch story is struck in the first scene which opens the tragedy, for the episode of the meeting with the three wayward sisters is to be found in Holinshed substantially as it is indicated in the opening of the tragedy. There meet him, on a laund or barren heath, as he is journeying after his conquest of a neighbouring king, and while he is in company with Banquo—three women in strange and wild apparel, resembling creatures of elder world, who addressed him—"All hail! Macbeth, Thane of Glamis" (his father, Sinel, being lately dead). The second said—"All hail! Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor." But the third said—"All hail! Macbeth, that shall be King of Scotland."

Boece describes these three elderly ladies ungallantly as "*tres mulieres insolita faciè*"—or, roughly, as three women of unaccustomed or strange aspect.

By this you may perceive how closely the artist constructor of the play considered himself bound to follow history where it was practicable, and by the adoption of this prophecy of the hags, in the opening scene introducing "Macbeth," his recognition of its value as an episode in unravelling and explaining the incidents which ensue, and the character and characteristics of its hero and central figure—who supplies the title *rôle* of the tragedy.

These witches appeared unsought, but they ministered to his (Macbeth's) evil nature. They fired the spark of cruel and sinister ambition, and applied the torch to the dry flax of pride and selfishness within him until his nature was all ablaze.

* Boece, Vol. II., p. 260, Bk. 12, ch. 3.—"Oalland him oft times febil coward and nocht desirous of honouris," etc.

I do not propose to go at length or fully into the characters of Macbeth and of his wife, as delineated by the poet, as this is an endless subject of profitless discussion and speculation.* It is sufficient for me to say that Shakespeare followed the story as he found it. He did not find the lady tender, delicate, loving, and a paragon of virtue, committing crimes to please her husband, as one school of silly people suggests she did, nor did he find Macbeth a cowardly, treacherous, feeble, and sinister fiend as other wise folk pretend. In the chronicles, husband and wife were equally bad. They were both undoubtedly ambitious, malignantly selfish and cruel. The sentiment of pity and commiseration they arouse in us, in spite of their crimes, was not gained by the sacrifice of truth, but by its preservation. By presenting these people as they in reality were, and as actual and real beings, living in a most ruthless and barbarous condition of society, yet to be pitied rather than wholly detested, from the dire and withering severity with which they were punished. Their evil passions were made the whips by which they were plagued. Their misery was condign. The poet has thus, as you see, followed the narrative of history in its most authentic details with a strange fidelity. He presents us with the living acts and lineaments of the actors who appear but as abstractions in the page of history. Suppose for a moment you took up the pages of Buchanan or Holinshed, what or how much of the realism of life could you attain! In the tragedy, the true Macbeth lives again, as he lived nearly 600 years before. His wife taunts him, "Fie, my lord, fie, a soldier and afeard? What need we fear; who knows it," "the sleeping and the dead are but as pictures," just as the real Lady Macbeth did in the flesh. This is

* Some of the varied opinions expressed on this point, at different times, since 1785, will be found in Dr. Furness's invaluable edition of *Macbeth*, pp. 410, *et seq.*

what I have designated true art, for surely this naturalness is the test of art. This reflection of actual nature, this vivid representation of actual occurrences, with the semblance of perfect truth and such abstract grandeur, is Art.

But the poet has not followed the story servilely, although he has preserved its essential incidents faithfully. Macbeth killed his cousin and king—Duncan—by treachery, and traitorously, but not with the details or in the manner indicated in the play. This is the poet's variation. These are the features supplied by art. But the Celtic character of Macbeth—impulsive, brave to recklessness, whose hand answered to his will, with simultaneous action—is strictly preserved. The characteristics of identity and race were too material and significant to be passed over. The haughty, cruel, and revengeful lineaments of the ambitious usurper, expressed by the historian, are carefully maintained. So are the intellectual energy and sense of justice, which made him rule wisely for so many years. In like manner Lady Macbeth's character is discriminated, and those critics who have endeavoured to fathom the relationship in crime of the guilty couple, have certainly been wiser than Dr Johnson, who declared that though the tragedy was justly celebrated, for its solemnity, grandeur, and variety it possessed "no nice discrimination of character," a remark which may be declared as intelligible and just as intelligent as the bulk of what is known as profound and scholarly criticism.

No doubt both characters are idealised. Neither the husband nor the wife would have conversed with the same accuracy and poetry of expression in the barbarous age in which they lived, any more than they would have spoken in blank verse. But all the characteristics of their respective natures and temperaments are rigidly followed; they

are natural, but idealised. The wisdom of speech, the tenderness of thought, in accordance with his wife's character of him in the first Act,* the vivid imagination which makes him so childishly superstitious and a seer of visions, are maintained in every authentic speech of Macbeth's assigned to him in the play. When not unnerved by his crimes, he is every inch a king. Contrasted with Iago, or Richard III., his barbarous selfishness involves a wholly different malevolence. He has no enjoyment in human suffering; he has a strange vein of piety and sympathy in his reflective moods; but he is as relentless as a tiger and as sudden in his spring when in pursuit of his own aggrandisement and selfish ambition.

The contrast of Macbeth and his wife is marked by the greatest subtlety. She instigates him and urges him on. "She lay very sore upon him," says the chronicler, to the murder, and yet the consequences of the crime, after it is accomplished, visit themselves more severely upon her than upon her lord. Why is this? She from the first compassed the murder. She had no fear, but then she had no imagination, no belief. "The dead are but as pictures" is her nerving motive. Macbeth resolved on the murder; and with him to resolve is to do. Yet, by his imagination, he realises many, if not all, the consequences, and many which are but the terrors and phantoms of guilty minds. His fancy let loose more devils than vast hell could hold. This is but part of his highly-wrought organisation, of his Celtic fervour and enthusiasm. It is this quality which makes him so credulous, so superstitious. He believed in omens, in the return of spirits from the dead, in apparitions.

* "Yet do I fear thy nature:
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness.
To catch the nearest way."—Scene 5.

"He was of sharp wit and a very lofty spirit."—Buchanan, Vol. i. p. 262.

tions, and in the occult power of the witches. Their prophecy, which fell dead on the ear of Banquo, was from the first received by him as prophetic; hence his apprehensions at the time of the murder. But once plunged in crime, he has no remorse. He is a soldier, and resolved. He will fight out his life to the last, like a beast at bay. Come one! come all, the powers against him, corporeal and incorporeal, of the earth and the air! Let them all prove hostile, he will die sword in hand and with harness on his back!

With Lady Macbeth the case is so far different that real and not imaginary terrors, break her down. She reasons "things without all remedy should be without regard," but her mind gives way under the strain of her crime. Its consequences, she could not, by anticipation, realise. She cannot sleep. The memory of the past appals her. The scene rises again and again in the watches of the night to upbraid her. The recollection of the gentle Duncan, "like her Father, as he slept," breaks her peace. She sees no air drawn daggers which beckon her on. She sees not the vision of Banquo, "blood boltered" at the banquet, like her husband; she has no fears or dread of the supernatural, or of apparitions, it is the dread reality and remorse for the deed done which weighs her down and proves her death.

I have, perhaps, said too much, having so much to say about the principal characters; but, I feel strongly upon the necessity of explaining away some of the imbecile, æsthetic, gifted, scholarly, and "wondrously intuitive," as I hear it described, criticism, the mere jargon of impudent ignorance, which I so often, and still so often have seen, and see, repeated in print, about these characters.

There is one feature more, however, I cannot disregard or pass over, before passing on, and that is the harmonious

uniformity of Macbeth's character with the traits of his race, rather than with our conception or ideal of what a stage villain should or ought to be.

When inferior artists make a villain they write "villain" in large letters all over him. He is made like Barabbas in the "Jew of Malta," or Quilp in Dickens, or an ogre in a nursery tale, or that most conscientious Othello, who daubed himself remorselessly all over, in order that he might be of one consistent, unredeemed blackness. Now Macbeth is of lofty courtesy and hospitality, and is moreover endowed with a fiery and passionate eloquence, which is pregnant with poetic allusion and a fertility of illustration beyond the reach of any other artist than the poet. Is not this part of the characteristics of his race? It is no part of the stock-in-trade of a stage villain. Are not the Celtic race one and all vehemently eloquent? He is regal and urbane to his friends, tender and kind to his wife, pathetic, even pious, in his calmer moods; is not this natural too? He knows that the air drawn dagger with its gout of blood is but a dagger of the mind, an unreal mockery, and yet is he so far the creature of his own credulity, of his too vivid fancy, that he must needs believe. He is the unwilling slave of his own illusions. He reasons on them, yet obeys, and this, I should say, is as much a true and authentic characteristic and feature of the Celtic nature as the perfervid poetry of diction, and both are alike artistic, for the art itself is Nature.

I have two or three other points to touch upon before I conclude. The question, whether Shakespeare drew his intimate knowledge of Macbeth's country (using that term in its primary sense) Dunsinane, Forres, Glamis, Nairn, etc., from actual knowledge or reading? Another is in reply to the absurd and wholly futile suggested rubbish, that Shakespeare was indebted to Middleton for all the

machinery of the "Witches," and to Thomas Middleton's particular play of "The Witch" especially; a suggestion so childishly ignorant as to be beneath contempt, but that such respectable authorities as Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Howard Staunton, the Editors of the "Clarendon Shakespeare," and even Dr. Furness have, to save themselves the trouble of investigating the matter, given partial credence and authority to the silly fable. The third is to the very curious features presented by the greatly despised "Porter's speech," in the opening of the second act, which Coleridge did not think was Shakespeare's language at all, or in any sense worthy of his genius, but which has, notwithstanding a strange historic value. Of course, as to the first point, little need be said, for it is not very material whether Shakespeare was ever in Scotland or not, save that the features of knowledge of the country, and of the resources and characters of the witches presented in the tragedy, are much more consonant with the witch traditions of Scotland than of England, and do in fact suggest a most close, intimate, and perfect knowledge of Scotch witchcraft, as illustrated by the Scotch trials. This is, of course, as it should be, but is it by accident or by design, or was the poet's knowledge attained by presence at some of the actual trials for witchcraft which took place in Scotland under James?

I have already said that the King wrote a book in 1596, in answer to Reginald Scot's work, published in 1587, disputing the existence of witches. One of the results—the unfortunate results—of the Royal belief was the issue of a Commission the same year and the year after when the "Dæmonologie" was printed, by way of sustaining and enforcing the Royal wisdom. This Commission was issued to the Baillies and Provost of Aberdeen, to try Janet Wishart and others—some ten or twelve in number—

accused of witchcraft. The result of this Commission in the two years 1596-7 was the strangling at the stake and burning of twenty-three innocent women and one man in the town of Aberdeen alone. Among the witches brought to trial, at least two presented some features of resemblance, in the supernatural powers ascribed to them, to the witches in "Macbeth." One of them, Violet Leys, was charged with bewitching a ship and raising a storm of wind. Another, Isabel Ogie, was also charged with allaying the wind and making it calm—with a false calm—and smooth. A third was indicted for foretelling periods of dearth by peeling blades of corn,* as they grew inclined from or towards the sun. All these peculiarities of resource indicated in the Aberdeen trials, differing greatly from those attributed to the English witches in their respective accusations, are expressed in the tragedy, it will be recollected.†

The Scotch witches, moreover, had a more social habit than their English sisters. They met on Sundays in the country to indulge in revelry, finding, I suppose, the Scotch towns so uncommonly dull on the Sabbath. It was this species of "witches' Sabbath" which Burns, in Tam O'Shanter, has made us acquainted with—when "warlocks and witches met in dance"—and which is, I think, peculiar as a Sabbath gathering to Scotland, and is certainly indicated in Macbeth, as he first meets the three "hags," after enjoying such a celebration at Forres.

On the occasion of these meetings they had, in Scottish belief as declared at the trials, a Queen of the Revels, or

* "If you can look into the seeds of time, and say which seed will grow and which will not, speak then to me."—*Act 1, sc. 2, l. 60.*

† "Middleton's witches can hurt the body, Shakespeare's have power over the soul. . . . They originate deeds of blood and beget bad impulses in men, &c. . . . Charles Lamb. *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, 174, Ed. 1808.) They are elemental engers without sex or kin."—Coleridge, *Literary Remains*, Vol. II., p. 238.

Queen of Elfin, or Faëry—as we should say, a Fairy Queen—who was described in the narrative “as like a man, but stronger, very pleasant, who could be old or young at pleasure, and was very happy with playing and dancing.” This lady is indicated in the play by Hecate, daughter of Perses, who from all time—as we see from the Seventh Book of Ovid—was held by the witches as their tutelary goddess. Whether Shakespeare acquired his local knowledge of the idiosyncrasy of Scotch witches on the spot is not material, but that he possessed it is certain.

Now some light was thrown on this point, that is, of his having probably visited Scotland, by Mr. C. Knight, so long ago as 1848, in his in some respects admirable and appreciative biography of the poet. From two entries in the registers of the Corporation of Aberdeen, discovered first by Miss Harriet Martineau, we have every judicious and sound reason for believing that Shakespeare, with his company (he then being an actor), visited Scotland and Aberdeen in the autumn (October) of 1601, and just after burying his father, John Shakespeare (September 8th), at Stratford-on-Avon.

Shakespeare's company was at the time out of favour at Court. His great patron and friend, Henry Wriothesley Lord Southampton, was in the Tower—that patron's relative and dearest ally had in the preceding February been executed. His management had taken 40/- to represent a “stale play” of Shakspeare's called *Richard II.*, in which the Queen had been informed and believed she was indicated as the murdered Richard, and that her deposition and death had been thereby aimed at and threatened.*

* State trials, Cokes speech, Vol. 1 (Cralk), p. 337. “How long lived King Richard II. after he was surprised in this manner.” See also Elizabeth's interview with Lambard, “I am Richard II, know ye not that.” Nichols' “Progresses of Elizabeth.” Vol. 3, p. 552.

Hence the company was under a cloud. But the cause which made them obnoxious in London, made them welcome in Edinburgh.

Southampton and Essex were believed by the King to be his staunchest friends and adherents in England, anxious for his succession and zealous even to suffer for his sake. Buchanan's knowledge of Essex, and the Earl's close correspondence with James had perhaps something to do with this belief. Here, then, was a reason why the company should visit Scotland. No doubt assured of a welcome, the company certainly went, for there is the entry in the archives of Aberdeen, under date of October 9, 1601, that a sum of thirty-two marks is ordered to be allowed in the accounts of the corporation, "to be given to the King's Servants, who played comedies, by reason that they are recommended by his Majesty's special letter, and that they have played some of their comedies in this borough."

This is the first mention of the appointment of Shakespeare's company as the King's Servants, and it might be doubted if it really referred to them.

A second entry, however, singularly and fortunately settles this point, by reference to the poet's senior partner, Laurence Fletcher, of a few days later date, viz.: the 22nd of October, which certainly seems conclusive that it was the poet's own company. On this day there is an entry thus:—

"That Laurence Fletcher, comedian (presumedly by birth or lineage a Scotchman), was admitted a burgess of the gild of the town of Aberdeen," and took the oath as usual, as one of the burgesses then created. Why not Shakespeare? some one may say. It is sufficient to reply that Shakespeare was not a Scotchman.

So much for the question of his being in Scotland, for such value or interest as the incident possesses.

Now for point number two. Did Middleton write or frame any of the witch machinery, or had he any hand whatever in "Macbeth?"

As I have pointed out, and will here definitely prove, "Macbeth" was written to be produced, and probably was produced before the Spanish and Portuguese Ambassadors, early in June or late in May, 1606, or before the King of Denmark, who, expected early in June, tardily arrived on the 17th of July, and returned home in August.

At this date Middleton had written no single play for the stage. He was at no time in the Globe Company, or engaged by them, before the theatre was burned down, June 29, 1613. In point of fact, his "Witch" was not written until after that date, and seven years at least, probably fourteen, after the production of "Macbeth" had elapsed before "The Witch" was even composed. It was never printed or published, although it may have been played, until it was discovered in manuscript, in 1779, by Capel. That mischievous person Steevens,* to bring discredit on Malone, suggested to that amiable and impressionable gentleman that this was the origin of Shakspeare's play, from some verses contained in the fourth act. Malone swallowed the bait, and in 1788† and 1790 allowed Steevens to make a note in the editions of Shakspeare then published. But before his death, in 1813, Malone had

* Disraeli, the elder, styled Steevens the "Puck of Literature."

† "Prolegomena." Bell's Shakspeare, Vol. II., p. 380, Ed. 1788. "Mr. Steevens has lately discovered a MS. play called *The Witch*, written by Thos. Middleton, which makes it questionable whether Shakspeare was not indebted to that author for the first hint of the magic introduced in this tragedy. Malone adds, to the observations of Mr. Steevens: 'I have only to add, that the songs beginning 'Come away' and 'Black Spirits' being found at full length in *The Witch*, while only the two first words are printed in *Macbeth*, favour the supposition that Middleton's piece preceded that of Shakspeare. Rash and preposterous conclusion.' . . .

discovered the fraud and imposition practised, and thus wrote—"In the former editions of this Essay the play entitled 'The Witch,' written by Thomas Middleton, has been represented as preceding 'Macbeth.' That piece ('The Witch') had been long unnoticed in manuscript, until it was discovered, in the year 1779. . . . I am now clearly of opinion that I too hastily acquiesced in his (Mr. Steevens') notion concerning the priority of that play to Macbeth."* So much for Malone's recantation; though, curiously, in spite of it, his blunder has been followed and perpetuated by all the editors of "Macbeth" until the present time.

Now, one of the songs in "Macbeth," "Come away, come away," Act V., sc. 3, has been attributed to Middleton. Curiously, although it may not have been Shakspeare's, it was a favourite song at Court in 1605, probably on account of some popular and favourite singer, for in the "Masque of Blackness,"† produced at Court in that year, the very song that appears Act III., sc. 5, was sung, with the stage direction "music and song within, 'Come away, come away.'" It is clear to the meanest capacity that Shakspeare did not write every line of "Macbeth" as it is now printed. The only foundation for the existing text was the folio of 1623. In this "Macbeth" was unquestionably printed from a corrupt and mutilated version of the true text, supplied by his co-managers and literary executors. It may have been an old stage manuscript, but, happily, not so incorrect as to destroy the beauty of the play, or obliterate its chief features and excellence.

Now, as to the final point, the precise date of its production, which I have so strongly insisted on, throughout this paper.

* Malone's "Shakspeare" Ed. 1821, Vol. II., p. 422.

† Nichols' "Progresses," Vol. I., "The Masque of Blackness, 1604-5," p. 486.

In the beginning of Act II. you will recollect, in the early morn, after the night of Duncan's murder, Banquo knocks at the gate of the castle; the porter bemuddled with drink, a very churl, and but half awake, commences a soliloquy, in which he likens himself to Cerberus, the keeper of Hell's Gates. Breaking into invective, he says, "Who's there?—i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty.* Who's there? i' the other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake; yet could not equivocate to Heaven; O, come in, equivocator." He then concludes his rambling, incoherent speech with the boorish declaration, "I'll devil-porter it no further; I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire."

Here is a speech which the critics have condemned as being purposeless and discordant; in fact, it has been placed here, apart from the exigencies of stage change, as a relief (by bringing us face to face with common life) to the tension and horror induced by the scenes preceding it, and the serious business which is yet to come. It is the discordant and jarring note often struck in momentous and awful moments, as on a trial for life, in murder, when some slight incident gives cause for most dissonant laughter. But the speech has, by accident or design, quite another value. It determines to a month, almost to a week, the date of the production of the play. Who was this equivocator who was to be admitted to the everlasting bonfire

* In the summer of 1606, the expectation of a bountiful harvest caused a sudden fall in the price of corn. In July, 1606, wheat was 33s. per quarter, a lower price than it touched during the succeeding 13 years.* In 1605 it was 35s., 1607, 36s., 1608 56s. 8d., 1609, 50s.

who could not equivocate to heaven, but could swear in both scales and had committed treason in God's name?

Warburton said this alluded to the Jesuits, and his careless and inexact general averment has been copied and followed for more than a hundred years since. It did not refer to the Jesuits, but to one Jesuit, the ringleader, and head and principal, so far as was known, in the great Gunpowder Treason of 1605—Henry Garnet, the Superior and head of the Jesuits in England—who had been tried, after many examinations and frequent delays, on the 28th of March, and sentenced to death; and who was executed on the 3rd of May. No trial of all the conspirators engaged had aroused so much interest and attention in England. The various examinations; the fact that he had been the chief instigator in the treason; his dialectic skill and obstinate cunning and courage, had all awakened interest.

At his trial in March, a book called "A Treatise of Equivocation," which he had issued, was called in question. In this work it was suggested that a man reserving his meaning might deny that he had done or performed any particular act imputed to him. It was called "a treatise against lying and dissimulation," but it taught and enjoined the practice of both. Tresham, who had been led into treason by Garnet, had declared with his dying breath that he had not seen Garnet for sixteen years.* In fact, they were accomplices, and had met frequently to plot their treason during the year 1605. Asked to explain this, he (Garnet) said that Tresham (in accordance with the principles in the book) only equivocated, and in further

* Vol. 2, Winwood's Memorials, p. 205, 6. Chamberlain to Winwood, under date April 5, 1606, as to Garnet's "multifarious equivocation," and that "he had had his finger in every treason since 1586," p. 206. Garnet was arraigned, James himself being present, 28th March of the same year.

answer to Lord Salisbury, said simply, "It may be, my lord, that he meant to equivocate." This phrase, it is needless to say, became a cant or slang phrase. The day before his (Garnet's) execution, Dudley Carleton, afterwards Lord Dorchester, writing to Chamberlain, said, "He, Garnet, hath been since [his sentence] often visited and examined by the attorney, Lord Coke, who finds him shifty and faltering, false in all his answers, and it is looked he will equivocate at the gallows, but he will be hanged without equivocation." *

In fact, he did equivocate, and was so hanged, saying with his last words, "It is no time to equivocate now; more than I have confessed, I do not know," which was, of course, not true. There were other references to the word "equivocate" on the scaffold, and its use in the speech of the porter must have been obviously and with certainty made after and not before the execution, when the event was vividly fresh and strikingly in men's minds, in the month of May, and certainly not later than some date early in June.

I must—having already trespassed too lengthily on your patience—now conclude by remarking that having urged much that may appear tedious and worthless, and which would have been better left unsaid, I have still omitted more as to the general and prevailing belief in witchcraft and the dramatic motive and construction of the play, which I should have liked to have referred to. At the commencement I invited your attention to the play, as possessing a moral of defeated vice; of vice which became crime, and so burned the life it seized and entered into and possessed away. Lamartine, the French poet, remarking on this very play, says: "It is as a moralist that Shakespeare excels;

* Sir Dudley Carleton to Chamberlain, S. P. O., date May 2, 1606.

no one can doubt this after a careful study of his works. There breathes through them so strong a belief in virtue, so steady an adherence to good principles united to such a vigorous tone of honour, as testifies to the author's excellence as a moralist, nay, as a Christian."

In Act IV., sc. 3, l. 140, are these lines:—

Malcolm. Comes the King forth, I pray you?

Doctor. Ay sir, there are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art; but at his touch
Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand
They presently amend.

Macduff. What's the disease he means?

Malcolm. 'Tis called the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good King,
Which often since my here-remain in England
I have seen him do. How he solicits Heaven
Himself best knows: but strangely visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks
Put on with holy prayers, and 'tis spoken
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction, with this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.

This description of the power claimed by Edward the Confessor, and ascribed to him by the Romish Church, had been allowed to and exercised by the Tudor kings* and queens. Henry VIII., as we know from Cavendish, exercised this "miraculous gift" frequently, and crowds assembled and beset him at Amiens and elsewhere to be touched and cured. In 1603, James, although a Stuart, desired to exercise the same gift, but the Hampton Court Conference, considering the practice savoured of super-

* Henry VII. revived the ceremony and was the first who gave the "golden stamp," a custom continued down to Queen Anne.

stition and Papacy, were averse to its revival as a state function. James, however, revived it in 1605 or 1606, as is indicated by the allusion in the proclamation of 1610, which deals with it as a then established custom and appoints regular times and seasons for its exercise. Shakespeare has avoided any political difficulty by declaring the gift left to succeeding royalty, but there would seem little doubt that the concluding lines of the above passage were intended to have an appealing significance to the monarch's consuming vanity and belief in his divinity, and were a concession to the hour, like the reference, Act I, sc. 6, "The love that follows us sometimes is our trouble, which still we thank as love," an obvious reference to James' dislike of crowds which is even more accentuated in "Measure for Measure," Act I., sc. 1:—

. . . I love the people,
But do not like to stage me to their eyes :
Though it do well, I do not relish well,
Their loud applause and Aves vehement ;





MATILDE SERAO.

BY WALTER BUTTERWORTH.

THE tide of contemporary Italian literature is at a low ebb. Few names stand out from the great crowd of journalists, dilettante scribblers, minor poets, and non-descript quill-drivers, who flood the country day after day with a veritable deluge of evanescent writing. Even these few names have yet to make good their right to be inscribed upon the roll of Italian literature, with the single exception, perhaps, of Giosué Carducci, the poet.

Matilde Serao is, however, an interesting and important figure. She is probably the chief of living novelists in Italy, and is avowedly the finest flower of feminine intellect and culture in that country. She is only thirty-six years of age, having been born May 7th, 1856, at Patras. Her father, Francisco Serao, was an Italian political refugee; her mother a Greek princess, née Bonnelly. Her father was enabled to return to his native city, Naples, and there the family lived in straitened circumstances. She received such education as was available at the Normal School, and then obtained employment at the telegraph office in Rome. But this occupation was irksome to her. Her ardent nature chafed at restraint. Ambition to make a mark in literature had taken possession of her. She acquired a knowledge of shorthand, and became a newspaper reporter. In this capacity she had a varied experience, which, no doubt, has been of great use to her in her later

career. In 1878 she began to contribute sketches and articles to various journals, such as the *Fanfulla*, *Illustrazione italiana*, *Capitan Facassa*, *Tribuna* and many others. But these did not content her. She had not long been out of her teens before she was engaged upon a novel—"Fantasia." Its publication at once established her fame, for all the passion and fire of the southern girl's heart was poured into the book, and was sustained by unwonted power of analysis and description. Her interest in journalism did not abate. At her own cost she founded and edited the *Corriere di Roma*, which lived for two years only. Since 1887 she has, in collaboration with her husband—Sig. Edoardo Scarfoglio—edited the *Corriere di Napoli*, the strongest and most widely-read journal of Southern Italy. Meanwhile, besides writing an enormous quantity of original articles, she has published some seventeen volumes, chiefly novels.

Here, then, we have a lady novelist, representing the best current fiction of Italy, the pride of her compatriots, and with a large bulk of work already submitted to the public. What impressions do we gather from her writings? What is the substance and message of her work?

First, she is a tender-hearted, impulsive, enthusiastic Italian, and represents the best qualities of head and heart that young Italy has to offer. As she writes she transfers to paper the intimate life of her country. All classes are well known to her. There is no mistaking her firm and thorough treatment of rich and poor, titled and obscure. She manifestly speaks what she knows from experience, and it is to be doubted whether any living author so graphically portrays the life of the people of Italy. In particular she has a passion for her beloved Naples. She never tires of its crowded life; its colour, vivacity, variety, beauty; its sea; its crescent of hills; the ever-

changing glory of its skies, and its mysterious, smoke-capped hill of fire.

It was in Naples that she conceived her first subject, whilst yet at the Normal School, a legend drawn from those superstitions which permeate the lives and invest every action of the credulous Neapolitans. Even here in England, with prosaic steam-whistles shrieking in our ears, and smoky surroundings, there are unsophisticated people among us who cherish their little superstitious inanities, who half believe that birth, love, marriage, death, and similar trifles may be influenced by the passing of the salt, or the falling of a picture, or a dream evolved by uneasy digestion. But in Naples such superstitions are endless; every simple act of daily life, every possible event has its ghostly comment. Each quarter of the city has its good and evil spirits, and legends innumerable. Matilde Serao gathered up these remnants of folk-lore and superstition; delicately disentangled the poetry from the grosser accretions, and published her work under the title of "*Neapolitan Legends.*" Many of her short stories deal with girls' school life in Naples; others, with various phases of female labour there. The scenes of her chief romances are also laid there, indeed, she never strays far from her sunny city. Its every mood and aspect is known to her. When it was ravaged by cholera in 1884-5, she entered with great earnestness upon the task of laying bare all its festering sores in her little book, "*Ventre di Napoli,*" or "*Entrails of Naples.*" It is a shocking record of dirt and foulness, poverty and wretchedness; but she strikes many a sympathetic note with the poor Neapolitans, so densely cooped up in pestilential dens and tortuous fever-laden passages. In an epilogue she says:—

"Here ends this brief study of truth and of grief. It is too small to contain the whole record of Neapolitan wretchedness; too small, also, to contain the humble and

strong love of a Neapolitan heart. It is an incomplete chronicle, a cry from the soul, and may serve as a record and a prayer. Do not abandon Naples, now the cholera is over. Amid the good and beautiful cities of Italy, Naples is the best and most beautiful. Do not leave her poor, dirty, ignorant, without work, without succour. Do not destroy in her the poetry of Italy."

There is in current Italian journalism and literature, a vast quantity of fugitive fictional writing. An effervescent style is much in vogue, "empty and excessively graceful, brilliant in form, attractive and useless," as one of their own critics has said. Like airy bubbles glistening in the sun for a few moments, these highly-coloured sketches appear and disappear.

The style of Matilde Serao has some of these qualities, in spite of her immense superiority to the crowd of ephemeral writers. It is highly coloured, brilliant, and eminently graceful; flowing and voluminous, with a rich vocabulary; full of caressing diminutives, superlatives, endearing terms and heaped-up descriptions; a plethora of language which in literal English would be prolixity, but which in Italian seems the natural charm and luxuriance of that sweet language. But this is an impression only, and must be dismissed when we remember that the great romancer of Italy, Boccaccio, though full and copious, was terse and rapid in narrating.

It is probably this impetuous flow of language, impelled by her ardent and impulsive nature, which has led to the excessive bulk of work she has produced. She writes too fast. Almost every year brings its fresh volume. Less hurry, more condensation, more time for reflection, might lead to most happy results. On the other hand, she tells us herself that she writes simply because she cannot refrain.

It is noticeable that she has none of woman's harshness towards her sex. Rather the reverse. One always

feels the writer's heart palpitating with sympathy and tender kindness for the weaknesses and distresses of women.

She has the feminine care and quick observant eye for dress, ornament, and outward manners; and very skilfully employs these details in the indication of character.

Her love of external nature is very sincere and constant. Plant life, the voices of the wind, the sea, the hills, and the myriad forms of beauty in light and motion, all affect her in a degree only excelled by human life.

But one of the most remarkable features of her work is her melancholy. It pervades everything she writes. She is devoid of humour and merriment. Childhood, youth, prime, and age are alike gloomy to her. All sorts and conditions of people are victims of "the vile blows and buffets of the world." She declares "the world is full of unhappy ones." Her favourite book, "*The Romance of Girlhood*" (*Il Romanzo della Fanciulla*), is largely a record of her school-days, written at 29, when one would imagine her mind fondly recurring to her girlhood's days; but even that happy time was full of woes to her. It seems impossible for her to end other than by death. In each of these sketches of girlhood we read of death. In her longer novels it is the same. "*Heartsick*" (*Cuore Inferno*), which is a study of a woman's heart turned from cynicism and unnatural coldness to its normal state of warmth and susceptibility, ends in the death of the heroine just as she finds happiness. "*Fantasy*" (*Fantasia*) has for its climax the elopement of a faithless couple and the suicide of a pure, pitiful, deserted wife. "*On the Alert*" (*All' Erta Sentinella*) tells of a convict whose instinctive tenderness finds a vent and centres upon the child of the governor of the prison. The child dies after great torment. The convict is found a mutilated corpse on the rocks, having either

endeavoured to escape or committed suicide. "The Land of Plenty" (*Il Paese di Cuccagna*) closes at the death-bed of poor Bianca Maria, a gentle unoffending soul, who has lived a life of torture.

If for a brief space a few lighter scenes are introduced, they are quickly clouded by "the surly spirit of melancholy," and we are presently conducted to the inevitable finale—Death.

This mournful outlook upon the sea of life is probably due to her sympathies with that school of fiction now so much in evidence, the realistic or naturalistic school. She is the principal exponent of that school in Italy, and works with ardour on the lines they have laid down. This is not a suitable opportunity for an examination of the so-called naturalistic principles in fiction; but some slight reference to them is necessary in speaking of Matilde Serao. It will probably be agreed, that though the school has been modified in various ways, according to the bent of individual writers, there are two general characteristics: (1) Analysis of character; (2) a rigid study of environment.

And from these there seems generally to result a profound pessimism. It would be interesting to have a clear exposition from a capable pen, of this pessimism in relation to naturalistic methods, for indeed it is one of the most remarkable features of present-day fiction. Is it that too much peering into the secrets of the human heart is unhealthy—that too much brooding and self-examination engender spleen? Shenstone, in one of his quaint essays, says: "Our itch of reasoning and spirit of curiosity, precludes more happiness than it can possibly advance."

In saying that Matilde Serao is closely associated with the naturalistic school, let me avoid misunderstanding. She has none of the filth through which some of the French writers drag their readers, and but little of what

Archdeacon Farrar calls "the empoisoned honey of French realism, groping in the vile abyss of human degradation." These are incidental and not essential to naturalism. Her delicate feminine instincts recoil from coarse subjects, and it is to be regretted that "Fantasy," the only book I believe of hers translated into English, is precisely the one which, by its dabbling with illicit passion and betrayal of marriage vows, is most calculated to offend the susceptibilities of John Bull and his wife.

Her connection with naturalism is rather through that analysis and study of environment already referred to. She is given to what she calls "spiritual and physiological anatomy"—problems of "experimental psychology," and the like. I confess I have little admiration for these "Romans d'analyse," as the French call them. They are a strange conglomeration of fiction, psychology, love-dissection, pessimism, and cheap philosophy. Their author is not a novelist; he is a wordy psychologist. He dilates impressively upon the complexity of life, and forthwith begins to systematise it, as if it were a chess game and he the player. Page after page contains a great display of dissection of motives. Reading his work you assist at a sort of bloodless vivisection, scientific, perhaps, but trying and inartistic. Nothing must be left unexplained. For him, Emerson's words were written in vain: "We cannot write the order of the variable winds. How can we penetrate the law of our shifting moods and susceptibility?" No; mankind cannot be shelved and labelled into types with the neatness of an herbarium. As the same writer has observed: "Wise men are not wise at all hours, and will speak five times from their taste or their humour to one from their reason."

Matilde Serao is by no means free from this analytical craze. In fact, it is a distinguishing feature of her work.

Her method is to select a social problem. In her last and best work, it was the question of state lotteries. In others it is girl-labour, or prison discipline, or natural feelings at war with social conventionalities. Around this problem she groups her characters, which slowly develop, with a minimum of action and a maximum of comment. But the characters are too exclusively typical, too monotonously consistent. The authoress has her theory about each of them, and every act and thought is shaped accordingly. The main purpose is kept steadily in view, and every step must be towards the illustration and consummation of that purpose. She never allows her imagination to run riot on incidental characters, à la Dickens. Her seriousness of mind permits of no dallying, no swerving from the due development of motive. There is no suppression of minor facts, with the idea of leading to a climax.

And this brings me to that second feature of naturalism to which I have referred—the study of environment; of the infinite details and accessories of life. It is, I think, overdone. The axiom that we are “creatures of circumstances” has, doubtless, much truth in it; but we must not accept it as an absolute dictum. The naturalistic school have no eye for proportion in their study of detail. As has so often been said, the novelist’s business is primarily and essentially to tell his story. To halt again and again, as Matilde Serao does, in order to painfully copy a scene, sparing no single item, is neither artistic nor pertinent. When she interrupts her narrative in this manner to particularise each separate object in a room, it is as if a friend invited one to a dinner, and as each dish appeared, insisted on describing to the uttermost detail, the plate, the table linen, and the cruet. Meanwhile the dinner is apt to grow cold and tasteless. Description should be subordinated to the action and due development of character.

Again, in fiction prosaic life needs compressing, condensing, bringing into sharp contrast and relief. To strive after its exact reproduction is vain. True, common life is often tragic enough, but for one tragic moment we have years of commonplace. Hours, weeks, years of emptiness, and then—moments big as years. How insufferable would be a play which merely gave us a photographic presentment of life! The dry bones of a subject must receive the revivifying breath of the writer's personality, before a human interest is imparted to the work. It is interesting in proportion to what he puts of himself into it. The old superstition of writing in one's own blood had its inner meaning. His creatures—his creations—must be bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. Fortunately, however, the strong tendency of Matilde Serao to aim at an exact presentment of life has failed to eliminate her own attractive personality. Her efforts are meant to conscientiously present things from without in their naked reality, but where her plot leads to certain generous emotions, her own impulsive nature takes the reins, and for the time being we are in touch with Matilde Serao, and not with an objective study of that lady.

To sum up, then, I would say that in this interesting and notable writer, we find on every page earnestness, conviction, uncompromising directness of expression, grace of style. We may read through the lines a sweet and sympathetic nature, enthusiastic, but clouded by melancholy. Her faults are too rapid production, over-elaboration in description and analysis, too much stress upon the importance of environment, too strong an insistence upon trifles. There is a certain monotony of cleverness in her faithful portraiture of life. Page after page of minute observation, charming descriptions of undoubted truth; but rarely a moment of great strength—a sudden crisis—

an inspiration of genius, which once for all delineates a type, or flashes an ineffaceable scene before the mind's eye. She lacks in great measure that rare attribute of genius, the faculty of touching the simple and elementary springs of human emotion.

Probably her best work is her description of Italian life in all its phases. Here she is on safe ground. Her scenes are depicted with the truth and faithfulness of Dutch interiors. It is, perhaps, this faculty of reproducing the familiar scenes and acts of Italian life which constitutes her chiefest claim upon the attention of her many readers.

The following illustrative extract is neither better nor worse than hundreds of fragments of Italian life, sketched by her.

FROM "TERNA SECCA."

"On her way to the crowded lottery-office in the new St. Mary's (Santa Maria la Nova), Gelsomina paused at the Piazzetta dell' Ainto, and went into the shop of her cousin, Peppino Ascione, he who made the saints. It was a little shop, and the five or six saints, life-size, in sculptured wood, filled it. Peppino Ascione, strictly speaking, only made the head, hands, and feet, of delicately painted stucco; but he was the best stucco maker of saints in the Banchi Nuovi, the traditional quarter for saint-making. When required, he also painted the vestments on wood, softly touching them up and adding many an ingenious tint: the blue tunic of the Immaculate Madonna, strewn with gold and silver stars; the grey tunic and blue mantle of the great St. Joseph; the maroon tunic of the Poverello di Assisi. But he preferred, as all Neapolitans do, the statues dressed in real woollen and silk, a real embroidered tunic, and a real coat. Where the art of Peppino Ascione excelled was in the figures of Christ at the cross, crowned with thorns, the face streaked

with tears of blood, the dress soiled with blood from the open wound in His side.

"No one,—no one could make an *Ecce Homo* in torment like Peppino. And he would have been able to make a lot of money, but he was consumed by incurable *anæmia*, and ought not to have been occupied with sedentary employment in that little shop among the pungent odours of the colours mixed with the stucco. He was so pale and weak, his gums so white, and the cartilage of his ears so waxen, that he sat for hours before a *St. Michael*, the triumphant Archangel, without even being able to raise his hand and rub a little gold on the breastplate of *Beelzebub*. His eyes wandered fondly to the saints, which came rough from the sculptor, and went away all rosy and ecstatic, with their blue eyes turned towards heaven, and their delicate hands imploring grace from heaven, or dispensing it on earth. *St. Filomena*, with her arrow, like a pen; *St. Rocco*, with his wounded knee exposed, and followed by his faithful dog; *St. Biagio*, dressed like a bishop, in the act of benediction; *St. Vicenzo Ferrari*, an open book in his hand, and the flame of the Holy Ghost above his head. Peppino Ascione gazed at them ecstatic and melancholy, as if imploring them that he might be cured. Beside him, on the bench by the vermillion, were his *maccaroni* cooked with tomatoes, which his mother sent him every day from *St. Giovanni Maggiore*, where he lived. They were in a red earthen stewpan, going cold. Peppino did not touch them; he was never hungry. Nor did he drink of the *Marano* wine, in a bottle of greenish glass, covered with a twisted vine leaf. He felt a weakness coming over him, and exclaimed, 'I can do no more!'

"When *Gelsomina* entered the shop that morning, he was forming a little crown of artificial roses for the blond head of a *Madonna della Saletta*, dressed all in white, and

her little rosy hands concealed under the ample sleeves of white woollen.

“ ‘Peppino, will you lend me five soldi?’

“ ‘What for? To buy cotton for your cover?’

“ ‘No; to put on some lottery numbers.’

“ ‘Are they good ones?’ Peppino asked languidly, ‘Will they come out?’

“ ‘Let’s hope so. If I win, I shall marry Frederick, the young hairdresser. Will you try the numbers?’

“ ‘Well; put a lira on for me. But let it be on a Terno Asciutto. It would be of no use to me to win an ambo of fifteen lire.’

“ ‘What will you do if you win, Peppino?’

“ ‘If I win? Oh, I know what I will do. Close the shop and go to a dear little place called Pugliano, on the hill of Somma. Fire within the earth and sun overhead. Fresh milk and good wine. A walk every morning in that delightful country, and you would see me come back fat and big at the end of six months.’

“ ‘And would you give up making saints?’

“ ‘Saints! If I were lucky, I would make a Madonna Addolorata, such as was never seen! And I would give it to the church of Pugliano. The dress should be of good black silk, all embroidered with fine gold, and a mantle of the same which should be a marvel. In her hands a white handkerchief of fine linen, edged with deep lace. The crown on her head should be of gilded silver, and the seven swords thrust in her heart, of gilded silver. The people would come from all parts round about, and even from Naples, to the little church of Pugliano, and pray to the beautiful Mamma Addolorata.’

“ ‘And why the Madonna Addolorata, Peppino, and no other?’

“ ‘Because she is the best Madonna,’ said Peppino, with profound conviction.



SONNET.

BY W. R. CREDLAND.

IS she more tender than the dreamy Night,
Or of her sex the brightest and most fair—
Perfect beyond Perfection's own compare—
The Poet's dream—the Painter's deep delight?
Or are there faults, unveiled to other sight,
Though hid to mine, which turn to common ware
The jewel that I deem so wondrous rare?
I do not know; and would not if I might!
But only this I know, or care to know—
My love is her's, and her's is all for me!
That in our hearts is Love's impassioned glow,
And on our lips his nameless ecstasy,
And through our souls the constant ebb and flow
Of joy too sweet for question whence it be.



